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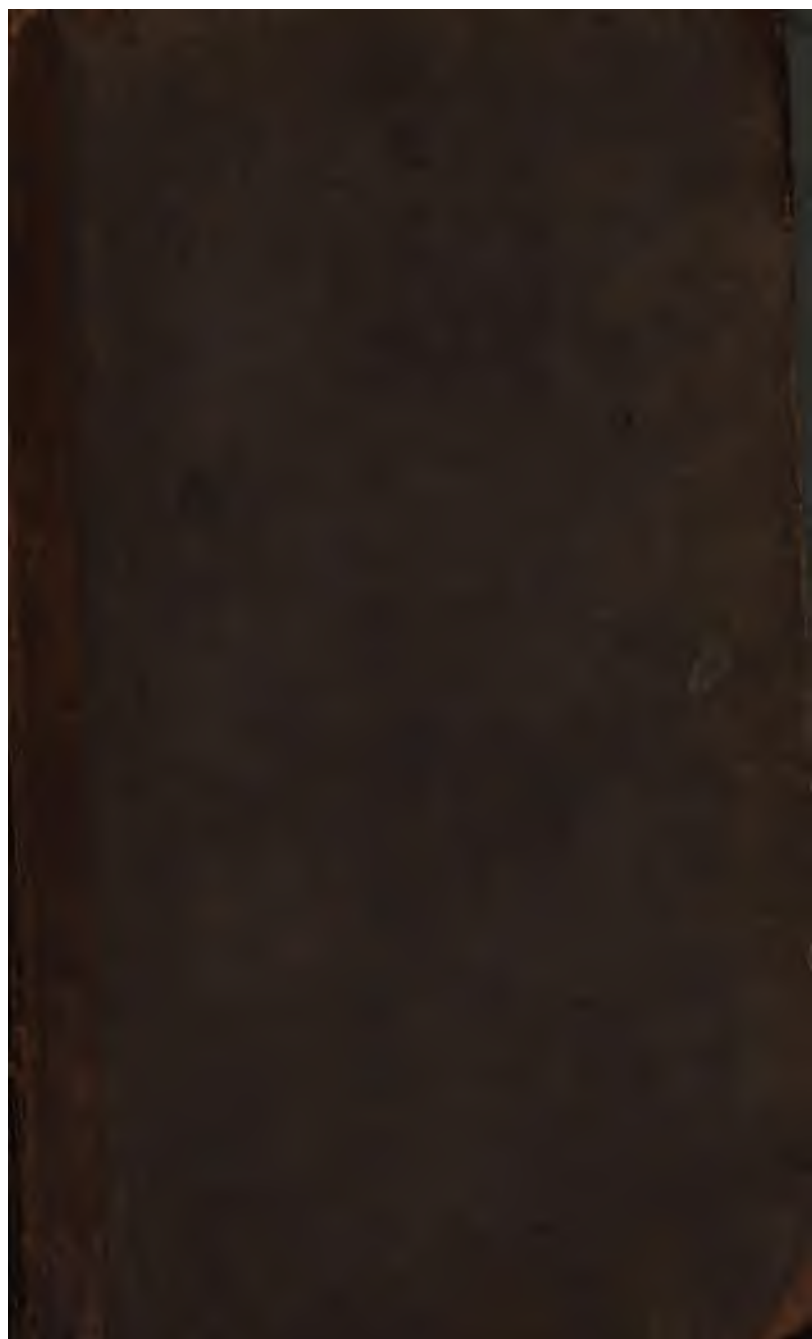
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THE
KNIGHTS,

Ec. Ec.

VOL. I.



THE
KNIGHTS,

Et. Et.

VOL. I.



THE
PREFACE.

IT may seem necessary to some readers to apologize for laying the scene of a fictitious story in the twelfth century, and introducing them to events supposed to have happened six hundred years ago. But the ages generally termed the

Heroic, afford ample matter on which to rest the excuse.

An institution so truly singular in the history of nations as the order of chivalry, must claim the serious attention of every student in human nature.

At a time when every Baron was a despotic sovereign, and every seat a garrisoned citadel; when the universal attachment of the nobles to the amusement of the chase, and the general neglect of cultivation, reduced a great portion of Europe into forests, which afforded shelter to innumerable banditti;

ditti; when the tyrannic Castellains plundered the defenceless passenger as he passed through their domains; and the Condottieri, with their troops, wandered over Europe, pretending to aid some parties, and pillaging all ;—

“ Such a state of things neces-
“ sarily produced and gave import-
“ ance to the order of Knight-
“ hood; and as even superstition,
“ omnipotent as it was in many
“ cases, was a feeble barrier a-
“ gainst the excesses of the mi-
“ litary age, it became necessary
“ to form a code of honour, to
“ supply the want of jurisprudence

“ and morals; and the security of
“ the crown, the execution of justice,
“ the protection of religion
“ and the laws, and the redress of
“ all injuries, particularly of those
“ offered to women or orphans,
“ were entrusted to the valour of
“ the knights, and formed the sacred
“ obligation which they contracted
“ by their oath of admission
“ into the order.”

Were it necessary to invite the regard of the reader to this curious institution, the manner in which it is described by the learned Dr. Robertson, would certainly allure the
atten-

attention, to acquire a just idea of chivalry.

“ While improvements so important, with respect to the state of society and the administration of justice,” says that historian, “ gradually made progress in Europe, sentiments more liberal and generous had begun to animate the nobles.

“ These were inspired by the spirit of chivalry, which, though considered commonly as a wild institution, the effect of caprice and the source of extravagance, arose naturally from the state of
“ society

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“ society at that period, and had
“ a very serious influence in refin-
“ ing the manners of the European
“ nations.

“ The feudal state was a state
“ of perpetual war, rapine, and a-
“ narchy; during which the weak
“ and unarmed were exposed, ev-
“ ery moment, to insults or in-
“ juries. There was scarcely any
“ protection against violence and
“ oppression, but what the valour
“ and generosity of private persons
“ afforded.

“ To check the insolence of o-
“ vergrown oppression; to succour
“ the

“ the distressed ; to rescue the help-
“ less from captivity ; to protect or
“ to avenge women, orphans, and
“ ecclesiastics, who could not bear
“ arms in their own defence ; to
“ redress wrongs, and to remove
“ grievances, were deemed acts
“ of the highest prowess and me-
“ rit. Valour, humanity, courtesy,
“ justice, honour, were the cha-
“ racteristic qualities of chivalry.

“ This singular institution, in
“ which valour, gallantry, and re-
“ ligion, were so strangely blend-
“ ed, was wonderfully adapted to
“ the taste and genius of martial
“ nobles ;

“ nobles; and its effects were soon
“ visible in their manners.

“ War was carried on with less
“ ferocity, when humanity came to
“ be deemed the ornament of
“ knighthood no less than courage.
“ More gentle and polished man-
“ ners were introduced when cour-
“ tesy was recommended as the
“ most amiable of knightly vir-
“ tues.

“ Violence and oppression ceased
“ when it was reckoned meritorious
“ to check, and to punish them.
“ A scrupulous adherence to truth,
“ with the most religious attention
“ to

“ to fulfil every engagement, be-
“ came the distinguishing charac-
“ teristic of a gentleman ; because
“ chivalry was regarded as the school
“ of honour, and inculcated the
“ most delicate sensibility with re-
“ spect to that point.

“ The admiration of these qua-
“ lities, together with the high dis-
“ tinctions and prerogatives conferr-
“ ed on knighthood, in every part
“ of Europe, inspired persons of
“ noble birth, on some occasions,
“ with a species of military fana-
“ ticism, and led them to extrava-
“ gant enterprizes. But they im-
“ printed deeply in their minds the
“ prin-

“ principles of generosity and ho-
“ nour. These were strengthened
“ by every thing that can affect the
“ senses, or touch the heart.

“ The wild exploits of those ro-
“ mantic knights who sallied forth
“ in quest of adventures, are well
“ known to have been treated with
“ proper ridicule. The political
“ and permanent effects of the spi-
“ rit of chivalry have been less
“ observed;

“ Perhaps the humanity which
“ accompanied all the operations
“ of war, the refinements of gal-
“ lantry, and the point of honour,
“ the

“ the three chief circumstances
“ which distinguish modern from
“ ancient manners, may be ascribed,
“ in a great measure, to this whimsi-
“ cal institution, seemingly of lit-
“ tle benefit to mankind.

“ The sentiments which chivalry
“ inspired, had a wonderful effect
“ on manners and conduct during
“ the twelfth, thirteenth, four-
“ teenth, and fifteenth centuries.
“ They were so deeply rooted; that
“ they continued to operate after
“ the vigour and reputation of the
“ institution itself began to de-
“ cline*.”

* Reign of Charles V. vol. i. p. 82.

It

It is scarcely necessary to add to this more proofs of the attention which the most respectable historians pay to this curious institution.

“ Such,” says Lord Lyttelton,
“ was the idea of chivalry in its
“ principles, and according to the
“ original purity of it ; nor can one
“ easily imagine a nobler incitement
“ to brave and virtuous actions ;
“ but it was an idea too perfect
“ for human nature ; and the ge-
“ neral practice of those who took
“ this engagement, was far from
“ being conformable to its inten-
“ tions and rules.

“ One

“ One may also object to it, that
“ not being confined to kings or
“ princes, but extended to great num-
“ bers of private men, it seemed to
“ take the sword out of the hands
“ of the magistrate, to whom only
“ belongs the maintenance of reli-
“ gion and justice in a well-governed
“ state.

“ But still the institution had
“ something exalted and heroical in
“ it; and I will venture to say, that
“ from the ninth to the sixteenth
“ century, the brightest virtues
“ which dignified either this nation,
“ or that of any other people in the
“ chris-

“ christian world, were chiefly de-
“ rived from this source.

“ Had it not been for the spirit
“ of chivalry, the corruption of re-
“ ligion, the want of all good
“ learning, the superstition, the fe-
“ rociousness, the barbarism of the times
“ would have extinguished all virtue
“ and sense of humanity, as well
“ as all generous sentiments of
“ honour in the hearts of the
“ Nobility and Gentry of Eu-
“ rope*.”

* Lord Lyttelton's *Reign of Hen. II.*
vol. iii. p. 161.

An institution so extraordinary in its nature, and its consequences so extensively beneficial to mankind, must certainly interest the regard of those who love to contemplate the most striking features that mark the records of nations.

The following story presumes not to call itself a *picture* of chivalry; it only pretends to give to those who chuse not to collect an idea of it from the annals of history, a slight sketch of that memorable order of knighthood on which the ancient Romances founded the chief basis of their fascinating fictions, and which gave occasion to the provincial Poets

to

to revive the long-lost taste for the harmony of poetry.

The sentiments, as well as actions of many heroes who were the glory of chivalry, appear to modern judgement so truly extravagant, that the sober page of history may sometimes be calumniated as romantic; and the illustrious Francis the First, be, by those who have not obtained a clear opinion of the manners of the heroic ages, classed with Sir Lancelot du Lake.

“ We hear much of Knights-Er-
“ rant encountering giants and quell-
“ ing savages, in books of chivalry.
“ These

“ These giants were oppressive feudal
“ lords ; and every lord was to be met
“ with, like the giant, in his strong
“ hold or castle. Their dependants
“ of a lower form, who imitated the
“ violence of their superiors, and
“ had not their castles, but lurking
“ places, were the savages of ro-
“ mance. The greater lord was call-
“ ed a giant for his power ; the less,
“ a savage for his brutality.”

Another terror of the gothic age
was monsters, dragons and serpents.
Their stories were received in those
days for several reasons : 1. From the
vulgar belief of enchantments: 2.
From their being reported on the faith
of

of eastern tradition, by adventurers from the Holy Land : 3. In still later times, from the strange things told and believed on the discovery of the new world.

What are Homer's Læstrigons and Cyclops but bands of lawless savages, with each of them a giant of enormous size at their head? And what are the Grecian Bacchus, Hercules and Theseus, but Knights-errant, the exact counterparts of Sir Launcelot and Amadis de Gaul?

The Author of the following Romance, aware of the just blame with which sober criticism may reprehend

prehend the absurd alliance of History with Fiction, which are sometimes blended together in works of fancy, has not ventured to adopt a single anecdote from real events, nor confused historical facts by intermingling them with imagined transactions.

Endeavouring to accord the characters with the sentiments; and the nature of the incidents, with the state of occurrences in the times in which the scene is laid, she has tried to avoid the censure of giving a modern character to a work which treats of ages past.

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Truly conscious of the difficulties which attend a strict regard to *costume*, she resigns this slight sketch of ancient times to the candid and the liberal, with the utmost diffidence.

THE AUTHOR.

November 13, 1797.

THE KNIGHTS,

&c. &c.

CHAP. I.

I lov'd thy green vales—lov'd thy wild brown hills,
And oft, ere manhood brac'd my limbs, have
climb'd

To their aspiring tops, with boyish fancy,
To image armies in the ev'ning clouds.
Oft, list'ning, from the rock's projecting brow,
My rapt ear fed upon the far-heard sounds
Of the deep toning horn, and my young breast
Burn'd for the fancy'd battle.

LANGHORNE.

IN the second crusade, when the Emperor Conrad the Third, and Louis the Seventh of France, united their innumerable armies to oppose the eastern

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infidels.

infidels, fell Serlo, Baron de Claire. His vast estates were, according to the laws of the English realm, seized by the crown ; and his son, an heroic youth yet a minor, was consequently subjected to the royal authority.

These circumstances rendered the fatal news of the Baron's death still more distressing, when the mournful information arrived at the castle, in the court of which young Sigefert and his sister were then amusing themselves ; the one exercising the bow, the other decking the arrows with ribbons in fanciful devices.

The lovely Leofrida had been entrusted by her father to the care of the Lady Editha, his sister, a woman of cautious prudence and tender benevolence, but whose successive train of misfortunes had so worn her temper, as frequently to betray her into involuntary peevishness. She heard the tidings of her brother's fall in battle

battle with fortitude, that insensibly sunk into despondency ; and, while she wished to be resigned, the cold languor of despair tried to creep into her bosom.

The youthful sports of the heir of De Claire were now changed into the keenest anguish ; distress for the deprivation of a parent whom he had submissively revered, for a time solely employed his regrets ; the peculiar unpleasantness of his own situation at length found room to afflict him, and his native magnanimity revolted at the idea of being so absolutely dependent. But the soul of Sigefert was too young and too ardent to dwell long on the misfortunes that regarded his own fate ; and, while the grief sacred to his father's memory disdained to lessen, he threw aside the means of selfish affliction, and manly firmness braced the spirit of a youth.

Leofrida, who was two years younger than

than her brother, possessed all the finer sensibilities of the female soul: she was gentle, good, compassionate; but there was an inconstancy in her temper that, whenever she surprised it stealing upon her, vexed the exquisite good sense of her understanding.

Her amusements, her employments, were entered upon with sanguine expectation; but if they were repeated the next day, Leofrida wondered why they pleased her less.

This wavering propensity was in no measure corrected by her aunt's admonitions, which wanted that energy necessary to subdue it. She heard of her father's death (the first sorrow that had ever agitated her soul) with unresisted affliction. The Lady Editha beheld her agony, and rousing her own resolution, which declined more from dejection of mind than want of exertion, she endeavoured.

voured to revive the spirits of her tender charge. She took her apart with a fond air, and leading her into her apartment, put into her hand a small ebony casket.—This, my child, said she, is the last bequest of your beloved mother to her darling daughter.—When my tender Leonfrida arrives at the age of reason, said she to me, deliver to her this last gift of a parent anxious for the felicity of her child; deliver it to her on the first misfortune that shall assail her youth.—Leonfrida took the casket, and opening it, found only a small slip of white velvet, on which was embroidered, by the hand of her mother in Saxon characters, the following sentence, being the war-word given in battle by the chiefs of the family, afterwards assumed as motto to their insignia—

Subdue, and triumph.

On the reverse were added these words : —“ Through the combat of life, remember this.”——

Softened by distress, the mind of Leofrida was more than usually tender. The remembrance of her mother, whom she could but just recollect, animated her with a virtuous enthusiasm; she kissed the motto with ardent reverence, and fastening the precious shred to a string of pearls which she wore round her neck, placed it next her heart.

Ever sanguine and ardent, Leofrida hastily resolved to make this parental admonition the rule of her whole life; and regarded the little treasure as a talisman, which would lead her through the severest adversities safe and triumphant. Her soul was too generous to suffer this impression to decay, and it influenced her in the full force of duty and virtue.

Sigefert was long before, in any measure, he regained his wonted serenity; and the affectionate efforts of the favourite companion of his exercises and youthful

youthful enterprizes, lost their friendly aim.

Osborne was the son of a gentleman who was a vassal of the late Baron, and a peer of the barony; he was consequently admitted to a military education in the castle, and became the beloved partner of Sigefert. He had now nearly passed his noviciate as a page; and his intrepid soul glowed to acquire the dignity of Esquire, when he might signalize himself in arms.

The character of this youth was as bold, heroic, and generous, as that of the young Baron, but it differed materially in being distinguished by a quality uncommon in so tender an age: this was a steady presence of mind, that extricated him in all the little difficulties attendant on childhood and youth. Sigefert was impetuous; and his rapidity of temper

frequently involved him in distressing perplexities.

The military exercises, which formed the discipline of those who were candidates for knighthood, were now pursued with less ardour. Each were past the age when the severer and more laborious tasks began : those tasks which require an uncommon portion of valour, strength, and dexterity. They had, long since, practised to vault on a horse in heavy armour ; to run, to scale walls, to leap over ditches, under the same incumbrance ; to wrestle, to wield the battle-ax, for a length of time, without raising the vizor, or taking breath ; and especially to perform with grace all the evolutions of the menage ; for in the government of the steed consisted one of the chief accomplishments of a knight. The various labours of a real battle, they were wont to rehearse with the most lively ardour.

A va-

A variety of other employments claimed the care of Osberne, whose particular charge, as Esquire, was to do the honours of a court. He was assiduous to acquire all those refinements in civility which formed what, in the heroic ages, was denominated Courtesy, the distinguishing character of chivalry.

The amusements too of the young warriors were now feebly pursued, or entirely suspended. They no longer danced—no longer played on the harp—no longer bounded, at the sound of the bugle, to pursue the nimble stag—no longer taught the soaring falcon to descend from his aerial journey at the slightest signal from his master.

The sadness that prevailed at the castle was soon increased by the intelligence that the wardship of the young Baron was committed to the Earl of Lenox, Lord High Steward of the realm. It was easy to

perceive that this was a method of aggrandizing a favourite, by giving him an opportunity to accumulate the wealth of his ward for his own purposes. The Earl was a man who, under the fair disguise of considerable liberality and amiable meekness, concealed a rapacious thirst for wealth, and the mean pride of a contracted soul.

The Lady Editha, with poignant concern, beheld her beloved nephew thus consigned to the guidance of the avaricious favourite, whose real character, notwithstanding his artful disguise, was somewhat known; and the young Sigefert felt all the unbridled indignation that could fire a soul intrepid, ardent, and independent.

Leofrida's distresses now thronged around her; the death of her father, the unpleasant situation of a brother whom she fondly loved, and the very small portion that had been laid apart for her own dower,
together

together with the unprovided state of her aunt, all seemed to frame in formidable array, a phalanx of foes; but her soul yet glowed with unabated enthusiasm in the cause of virtue, and her animated imagination painted herself decked with the glories of subdued adversity.

In a few weeks there arrived at the castle a letter to the Lady Editha, from the new guardian of Sigefert, expressing in the most courteous terms his concern for the welfare of the charge committed to his trust, his gentle greetings to herself, with professions of anxious regard for the heir of the illustrious family of de Claire; concluded by requesting her to remain still at the castle, where he resolved for the present to detain his ward.

In the letter was inclosed one to the young Baron, expressive of the most disinterested regard, and even parental affection; but there was wanted in the

terms used, that frankness and amiable integrity which in a sincere character the occasion would have inspired. Sigefert had too much discernment not to perceive this; and an indignant dislike to his new guardian instantly seized his soul. He was walking with Osberne in the forest adjoining the castle when he read the epistle; his favourite weapon, his bow, was in his hand, and in an impulse of impatient anger, winding the paper round the head of an arrow, he shot it among the trees.

Nothing more was heard of the Earl for some time; he was too much occupied with the arrangement of the Baron's estates, now the property of the crown, to attend, as his duty required, to the education of his ward. Sigefert and Osberne pursued their accustomed exercises; the Lady Editha acquired a kind of restless resignation, and Leofrida regaining her tranquillity, still forgot not her resolutions of fortitude. She delighted to be
present

present when the two youths performed with ardour, that gave their sports the appearance of reality, their mock achievements. In a lonely spot in the forest, which they had cleared with their swords from the gorse and brambles that overspread it, they had formed a kind of amphitheatre. A rough hilly ascent composed one corner of the space, which on the inner side abruptly fell in a craggy steep: this they hollowed into a cavern for the purpose of an armoury, to contain their quivers, bucklers, and javelins. On the top of the rock they raised a tall pyramid of earth, placing on its summit the mark for their arrows. Tilting, wrestling, and hurling the javelin, were their darling amusements; Leofrida, in playful frolics, would weave for them shields of wicker-work, and twine the supple leaves of the willow in the form of helmets, cresting them with the stiffer boughs of the elm. Though partial to the fearless valour of her brother, she could not
forbear,

forbear, on these occasions, to admire that superior collectedness which gave an irresistible charm to every action of Osberne. He was more frequently victorious than Sigefert, whose haste often impeded the success his courage deserved; yet whenever he fell beneath the arm of his friendly rival, Osberne acted the victor with so much modesty and generous diffidence, that it seemed glory to be vanquished. In shooting, the arrow of Osberne, from the steadiness with which he took his aim, seldom failed to hit the mark with the most artful exactness; while Sigefert's dart was ever found to wing its impetuous flight many paces beyond its goal. Leofrida's own virtues taught her that a tribute of esteem was the sacred claim of merit; and when she beheld the distinguished graces of the accomplished Osberne, her frank and gentle heart bestowed on him the regard which she considered as that rightful homage, the first and most glorious privilege of the good. The daughter of
his

his patron was regarded by Osberne with reverential respect; but independent of this consideration, the beautiful, the playful Leofrida, in her own person, demanded and obtained a respectful admiration. In their mutual amusements, Osberne was ever devoting to his gentle companion a thousand little assiduities, which the heedlessness of Sigefert alone prevented him from rendering to his beloved sister. Grasping his sword, the former, would often, with a martial air profess himself the champion of Leofrida, while, if some inadvertent stag bounded near her through the bushes of the forest, he dashed upon it with more than the avidity of a hunter. The leafy chaplet with which her hand had adorned his brow, was to Osberne more precious than the selected plume of the most gorgeous casque; and, defended only by the buckler of osiers which she had woven, he deemed himself sufficiently armed to encounter a full harnessed detachment.

One day when the two youths were alone, in the circus appropriated to their exercises, earnestly engaged in shooting, Leofrida, who supposed them wrestling, unexpectedly appeared on the top of the eminence, to obtain a better view of the different stratagems they were wont to use. Osberne had taken his aim with his usual precision, but in the instant when he stretched the hempen string, a deer that he had tamed to domestic habits, leaped on him, and shook his arm. The shaft flew, and, lowered from its intended mark, pierced the foot of Leofrida.

Accustomed to feel pain with composure, she uttered no shriek, but sinking gently on the grass, called to Sigefert to assist her. He flew hastily up the ascent, and the frantic Osberne bounded to her aid nearly as rapidly as the unfortunate arrow had whizzed its fatal way. The head of the shaft was formed only of a goat's horn, pointed with but little care, as it
was

was designed only for purposes of exercise, and not barbed. The force with which it was dispatched had nevertheless inserted it beyond the skin; and the two youths stood in silent distress, not daring to extract it, till Leofrida herself with her natural quickness of action, which now wore the appearance of amiable fortitude, grasped the shaft and drew it from the wound. A stream of blood followed the extraction; she grew pale and faint; and the distressed youths with difficulty conveyed her to the castle.

The invariable tendency of Nature to restore ease to the human frame, soon healed the wounded foot of Leofrida; but this little incident shewed to Osberné, that the sufferings of the lovely sister of his friend inspired him with a sensation more exquisitely tender than that generous pity with which he ever regarded the pains of others. Leofrida too, with wonder beheld the anxiety of her brother exceeded by
that

that of his companion; but ~~he~~ attributed it to his having himself undesignatedly occasioned the accident.

Military exercises were again resumed; but target-shooting was no more the favourite employment of Osberne. No longer he formed the strait stems of the fallow into the polished arrow; no longer feathered it with the cast-off plume of the falcon. Martial glory was now all his aim; and Sigefert, who felt the same ardour as impatiently as himself, expected the hour when he should not only obtain his own investiture of knighthood, but by his privilege, confer nobility on his beloved Osberne.

The discipline undergone by those youths for the attainment of that illustrious rank of merit, the Order of Chevalier, consisted not alone in bodily exercise. The mind was trained to habits of heroic virtue, as the limbs were inured to labour
and

and agility. They were taught to practise that difficult quality, moderation in conquest, with as much constancy as the indispensable merit of invincible courage.

Preparative to the solemn oath which was to confirm them knights, they were instructed to venerate and to obey the sacred laws of piety; and to remember that the stern, the inflexible warrior, must preserve the meek devotion and sanctity of manners that adorn the recluse. The exalted sentiment of bravery in the cause of the distressed, was likewise inculcated, in all its amiable disinterestedness, while the most refined delicacy was instructed to mingle with the admiration bestowed on female beauty.

Thus educated, Sigefert and Osberne prepared, not more by the vigilance of their instructors than their own animated exertions, to sustain that illustrious character which exalted human virtue into heroism.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

A thousand heroes fill the spacious hall,
And helms and lances hang the frowning wall ;

The song begins, the minstrels sweep the string,
And the high roofs with martial clangors ring ;
Of tournament they sing, and tented plain,
A Percy victor, or a Douglas slain—

The sounds, like lightning, pierce each warrior's
foul,

And life's warm tides in brisker currents roll :
Their spears they shake, and clash the burnish'd
shield,

And seem triumphant ere they reach the field.

MAURICE.

THE Castle de Claire was an immense
structure. The many and severe
wars in which the late Baron had been
engaged, had induced him to fortify it
with more care than the palaces of the
noblesse usually demanded. This appear-
ance of strength, nevertheless, diminished
not

not that air of splendor and magnificence which the potent and lofty-minded Normans loved to display, when they found themselves the conquerors of England.

A long and wide entry led to the principal gate of the edifice, fenced on each side by an embattled wall; passages were thrown across from side to side, for the purpose of annoying an enemy, if he should have passed the gate of the bridge. In one of these passages stood Sigefert and Osberne, studying the various stratagems of attack and defence, when the trampling of hoofs sounded through the passage. Two pages sumptuously habited soon appeared; and, succeeded by a splendid train, Sigefert beheld his new guardian advance towards the great gate.

The Earl of Lenox was a man of low stature; his look was penetrating but suspicious; and an air of dignity, which
the

the limbs tried to assume, but which the conscious soul seemed to deny, instead of exalting, debased his aspect.

Already prepossessed with dislike to his guardian, Sigefert regarded him, now for the first time seen, with earnest aversion; and from the passage above, threw on him a glance of disdain. Osberne, ever more collected than his friend, tried to persuade him that respect for a personage, ordained his protector by royal authority, was yet consistent with the independence of an exalted soul. Accustomed to pay a dignified deference to the will of his sovereign, Sigefert consented to meet the Earl; and with reluctant steps, hastened to the chamber of state in which the noble visitant was received.

The Lady Editha had already greeted the Earl, when Sigefert entered the apartment. With an air of the most gentle regard, the artful Lenox accosted the youth.

youth committed to his wardship, and professed his anxiety to execute worthily the important charge, with a sweetness that would have been winning to a soul as mean as his own. Coldly respectful, Sigefert replied to his professions, and, for that day, the Earl felt no dislike to his ward; but it was not long ere each entertained a mutual repugnance to the other.

Having affairs concerning the neighbouring estates of the late Baron to transact, the Lord Steward informed the Lady Editha, that he must prolong his stay at the castle for two or three days. Apartments were accordingly allotted for himself and his retinue. The Lady Editha was not displeased with an occasion of conciliating the good graces of a person so nearly concerned in the guidance of her beloved Sigefert; Osberne was delighted with the conversation of the knights and esquires that attended the Earl; Leofrida was amused by the bustle of

of objects, and no one but the young Baron was vext at the occurrence.

On the day previous to his departure, the Earl returning from visiting some lands, passed through the forest. The road was narrow; and lodged upon the boughs that almost obstructed the way, he espied an arrow, round whose head was twisted a paper. Ever curiously suspicious, he ordered one of his pages to reach it to him, and unfolding the scroll, beheld his own letter, addressed to Sigefert. Vexation and a sentiment of indignation, nearly approaching to fury, seized the narrow soul of the Earl. He could not reasonably suppose that his epistle had been undesignedly thus ill treated : it was surely an intended insult, from a haughty and impetuous stripling.

This trifling accident, which a man of more considerate good sense would have regarded

regarded only with slight displeasure, occasioned the Earl to return in anger to the castle ; and when he next met Sigefert, his former sweetness of manners was changed into indignant austerity. The susceptible youth instantly caught the alarm ; and in the warmth of unreflecting impetuosity, his heart exulted that he was freed from the false civilities he regarded with just contempt.

Before the Earl departed, having adjusted the pecuniary affairs of the young heir, he paid to the Lady Editha the stipend he thought proper to allow for the maintenance and education of his ward ; but, though accompanied by his usual fervile courtesy, she perceived, with painful regret, the small number of the marks.

After the departure of the High Steward, the two youths, with added ardour, pursued their martial exercises; more

impatient than ever for the hour that was to commence their career of glory.

Three years now brought Sigefert to the age of twenty; and Osberne was only a few months older.

Sigefert was noble by descent, and consequently would attain the rank of Knight Baroneret. Osberne, whose parentage was not illustrious, had pretensions only to the Order of Merit. The guardian of the young Baron deemed it policy to his own avaricious designs, no longer to delay his investiture as a knight, and accordingly sent a summons to the castle for Sigefert to appear at court. For the first time, a letter of the Earl was read with transport; and the impatient youth hastened to pursue his journey, accompanied by Osberne. The Lady Editha sunk into despair at the tidings; to part with a nephew so justly beloved, was a severe trial; but endeavouring

vouring to obtain that resolution, which in her was only the result of painful reasoning, she tried to animate the weeping Leofrida. The sister of Sigefert found, that to support, for the first time, the absence of her beloved brother, required an effort which she was not accustomed to make; and not till the first emotion of her regret was over, she remembered the motto bequeathed by her mother.

The thought revived her animated-resolves, and, wiping away her tears with her mantle, she assumed a tranquil gaiety. Assisted by her aunt, Leofrida, with her own hand, embroidered the trappings for the steeds of the youths; and prepared for each a splendid furcoat. That for Sigefert, who was of princely descent, was of a dark crimson, in those days called purple; on it were wrought the devices of the family, richly emblazoned. The vest of Osberne was of white; as he was not yet ennobled, he had no device to adopt; but

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Leofrida,

Leofrida, in a courteous compliment to his valour, wrought on its border a wreath of palm-leaves.

The young Baron was to be attended by a splendid train, and for his chief page he chose Constantine: a youth of good family, and of a bold and ardent spirit.

Not all the ardour with which Sigefert and his friend were inspired, could prevent a gentle sensation of regret as they quitted the ladies. The idea that they would probably soon be employed in some glorious achievement, and consequently return no more to the castle for a long time, afflicted the tender Leofrida.

As she placed the mantle, she had wrought with so much care, on the shoulders of her brother, she accompanied the gift with a fond farewell; and, as her trembling hand presented the surcoat to
Osborne,

Osberne, the dignified courtesy of her air was mingled with the frank concern of friendship. The youths now, with a gallant mien, respectfully bade their adieu, and mounted their steeds. The Lady Editha and Leofrida ascended the tower raised over the western gate of the castle, and, on the platform of its hanging turret, gazed after the departing train. An avenue of the forest soon closed them from their view ; but, lingering behind the pages, Sigefert and Osberne, through the boughs that interposed, waved their hands in obeisance towards the turret.

The scenes of martial splendor to which they were going, glowed with less brightness in the imagination of the youths, while the tender memory of the social amusements they had partaken at the castle, lingered on their minds.

In a few days the young Baron with his train arrived at the palace ; he was ad-

mitted into a magnificent council-chamber, adorned with standards of conquered nations, together with national trophies; among which was the banner of the Cross; spears and bucklers were suspended on the pillars that supported the roof of the chamber. Sigefert and Osberne felt their bosoms throb with sensations not new, but more animated than they had ever before experienced.

Attended by a train of knights all arrayed in armour, but wearing their vizors down, the Marechal of the realm, who was to perform the ceremony of the investiture, entered the apartment. This distinguished personage was not more renowned in arms than celebrated for those merits that make glory deserved. His first appearance inspired the two youths at once with reverence and affection; and nothing, in the eyes of Sigefert, disturbed the delight of the hour, but the presence of the High Steward.

The

The solemnity now commenced :—the Marechal approached Sigefert, the knights forming a circle round him, and, in an awful voice dictated the terms of the oath. The young Baron, in a firm and manly tone, repeated as follows :—

“ I SWEAR to defend the christian religion ; faithfully to practise the morals of it ; to defend widows, orphans, and the weaker sex ; not to make war on account of goods or effects, but to let such disputes be decided judicially ; and to keep the truces of God.”

Two pages next brought the hauberk, or polished coat of mail ; Sigefert was arrayed in the steelly vesture ; the Marechal, with his own hands, placed round his neck the collar of gold, and fastened to his feet the golden spurs ; a casque of shining steel, whose crest was a silver martlet, was placed on his head ; the mantlings of the casque were of crimson ;

the wreath that fastened them to the helmet was a crimson cord, round which wound a string of pearls. The Marechal then touched his shoulder with a splendid sword, and conferred the title of Sir. The investiture over, Sigefert received the congratulations of the surrounding nobles and knights.

The investiture of Osberne, as an esquire, followed the preceding ceremony. The Marechal placed on his neck the silver collar, and his heel was adorned with the spur of the same metal. Possessing no lineal nobility, the heroic youth had to acquire honour by the more glorious means of his own exploits. He regarded the splendid decorations of his friend with a generous emulation; nor could the difference, in their present rank, displace the inviolable friendship that united them.

The Marechal, interested by the intrepid mien of Osberne, presented to him
a hel-

a helmet, ornamented only by a crest of plumes without device, addressing him in these words:—

“ To the truly brave it is more glorious to win than to inherit distinction. Go, bold youth, and on the field of combat, or in the illustrious cause of the oppressed, obtain and wear the insignia of chivalry. Let the first exploit that gives renown to your arm, give the device to your casque; and, instead of receiving from your ancestors the badge of glory, be yourself the ennobler of your posterity.”

The exultation of valour, and the glorious emulation of virtue, beamed on the cheek of Osberne; as bending on one knee to the Marechal, he bowed his head to meet the offered casque. With manly gratitude he thanked the generous Earl of Albemarle, for such was the Marechal's.

chal's name. Condescend, my illustrious benefactor, said he, in a modest tone, to direct that ardour you thus inspire. Point out some exploit that may lead my arm to gain, and to deserve, the distinction you reserve for this your valued gift!—and, O! may this helmet be decked with a crest that you yourself may view with approbation!

The Marechal seemed pleased with the request. If you wish to enter into the service of arms immediately, replied he, come, and beneath my standard commence your career of glory! In a few days I shall set forward for Bretagne. The barons of that country have taken arms to avenge the cause of the infant heir, who was entrusted to the care of his uncle; but the perfidious relation, disdaining the title of regent, seized the sovereignty in his own person. I go to join the arms of the faithful barons.

Osborne

Osborne with rapture accepted the Marechal's proposal; but threw a look of tender anxiety on his friend. The Earl of Lenox, at this occurrence, expressed in his air a kind of satisfaction, which wanted that trait of conscious serenity a good motive ever inspires; and turning to Sigefert, Shall the heir of De Claire, said he, be forerun, in the road of honour, by the son of one of his father's vassals? The heart of the young Baron exulted at the hint, while he resented, with generous indignation, the aspersions thus haughtily cast on his brave favourite. He turned coldly from the High Steward, and addressing himself to the Marechal, with a firm yet modest air, begged, as a private knight, to enter the lists of combat under his banner. With a look of complacency, the Marechal condescended to thank the young Baron for his alliance to his cause; and with mutual delight the new knights, for so was Osborne called, though he had not yet attained

attained the first order of chivalry, beheld themselves thus permitted to combat side by side.

The remainder of the day was passed in those splendid, yet dignified entertainments, that mark a martial age; but, among the beauties of the court, Osberne looked, yet looked in vain, for the unassuming graces of Leofrida.

Ten days was the short space allowed to Sigefert and his friend for preparations for their expedition; and for that tender farewell they must pay to the scenes of their youthful sports and exercises.

A more heartfelt adieu must be also paid to objects still dearer; the affectionate Lady Editha and the lovely Leofrida.

Early the next morning, attended only by Constantine, and accompanied by Osberne, the young Baron set out for the castle.

castle. A thousand scenes of war and glory pictured themselves in the young fancy of the two knights, as they rode over the long extent of uncultivated heaths, till the distant turrets of the castle, illumined by the setting sun, brought sensations to their minds that mingled soft regret with the impatience of valour. Gazing on the towers and the dark tops of the forest as on places they should soon behold, no more, they lingered till the crimson of the departing light was softened into a mild and serene glow; and then closing their vizors, in a sportive mood, hastened to the castle.

CHAP. III.

In Martial Glory's ancient year,
When each bold youth with beating breast,
Lac'd on the cors'let, grasp'd the spear,
And smil'd beneath his threat'ning crest;
The broider'd scarf, by beauty wrought,
Triumphant on their shoulders wav'd;
Valour th' enthusiast rapture caught,
And thrice ten thousand dangers brav'd.

THE ladies, as was frequently their custom, were walking on the terrace that, on the eastern side of the castle, overlooked the country. The cold and dim aspect of the evening east, gently blending with the rising mists, formed a scene, to the pensive mind of Lady Editha, more interesting than all the lustre of the dawn. They stood silently marking the deepening gloom, when they espied two persons, in armour, approach from the end of the terrace.
They

They started, and were hastily retreating towards a small door which opened from a corner tower, but stopped at the sound of a well-known voice. Surprise and joy for a time prevented them from observing minutely the new array of the youths; but as they hastened to lead them into the castle, they met, in the inner court, a page with a torch. The light flashing on the armour of Osberne, who was nearest to it, discovered to Leofrida a form still more graceful, manly, and dignified, than she had ever before beheld it. She could not help remarking that his plain habit, adorned only by the white furcoat, was more becoming than even the splendid decorations that decked the crest and hauberk of her brother. They entered a large saloon; and Sigefert mentioning the expedition they were soon to engage in, the delight occasioned by his arrival was soon changed into musing. Not all the anticipated glories of the enterprize could, for
a time,

a time, obliterate the regret of his first parting.

The next day was passed in mutual concern. Leofrida had resource to the precious shred of velvet, whose charm still retained its potency in her ardent soul, to support her in this affecting hour; and painting in her imagination the two knights returning, decked with all the trophies of victory, she gradually persuaded herself to become composed. The Lady Editha, whose good sense and painful effort often supplied the place of the elasticity of mind that naturally resists grief, reasoned herself into a temper of serenity.

A few hours before the youths were to bid their final adieu, Mortimer de Vescie, the chamberlain of the household to the late Baron, a faithful adherent to the family, took Sigefert apart, and leading him into the armoury, began as follows:

Praised

Praised be Heaven for permitting me,
ere these tottering limbs fall into the grave,
once more to behold an heir of De Claire
enter the glorious lists of arms! Go!
illustrious youth, and reap that renown,
the hereditary right of your race.

To animate your ardour, listen while
I disclose the last event of your father's
glorious life, and deliver into your hands
a relic which, in the severe conflicts of
war, shall ever inspire your valour.
Sigefert, interested by this prelude, waited
in anxious expectation, and Mortimer
proceeding to the farther end of the
apartment, displaced some armour that
concealed a small door; he carefully un-
locked it, and entered a closet followed by
Sigefert. Behold, said the faithful old
man, pointing to a buckler that was sus-
pended in a deep recess scooped in the
wall, the guardian of a warrior's life,
whose aid was scorned when the sacred
laws of severe honour forbade it to shield
his

his breast!—In the battle in which your father fell, after a general engagement of many hours the foes were routed, and the Baron, pursuing the fugitives, encountered a knight renowned for gallant bravery. They closed, and the Baron, by an effort of extraordinary might, cleft the shield of his foe, already battered in the fight; it fell from his arm, and the generous Briton disdaining the advantage, cast his own buckler on the ground. At that instant, an arrow from the hand of a retreating archer pierced the breast he had thus unguarded, and turning to his shield-bearer, he could only say, “Preserve my buckler; bear it to my castle; and when the hand of the little Sigefert has learned to wield arms, give him that, and let it remind him to guard his life no longer than he guards his honour.”—The young Baron, with a tender veneration, took the sacred shield from the hand of Mortimer, and as he reverently kissed it, a tear from his manly cheek fell upon the camel and cypress-

cypress-tree which were richly embossed on a field of azure. The incident thus related sunk deep in his heart, and had his generous soul been less susceptible of that exquisite sense of honour inculcated by the maxims of chivalry, this little occurrence would have instilled it.

After thanking the venerable Mortimer for his true affection, and selecting from the stores, swords and lances for himself and his friend, he hastened to bid adieu to his friend and sister. With an affectionate yet firm air, Sigefert pronounced the loth farewell; and Osberne, having respectfully expressed his gratitude to the Lady Editha, found for the first time, when he turned to Leofrida, that the presence of mind he had before felt easy to command, now required an unusual effort. The playful charms of this lovely damsel were now advanced to the still sportive but more interesting beauties of youth's first and most blooming period.

The

The tender and the lofty graces were so blended in her heart and mien, that dignity exalted gentleness, and gentleness softened dignity. Osberne respectfully bent one knee, and wished to express his reverent and ever constant esteem for the daughter of his honoured benefactor, and the sister of his beloved friend; but no terms he could select seemed sufficiently consistent at once with his respect and his anxious concern for her happiness. At this instant, when he was quitting the presence and society of an object so fascinating, a tumultuous croud of sensations confused his formerly sedate mind; and his hand trembled as he raised to his lips the border of her mantle. With a smile courteously sweet she bade him adieu.

Farewell, gallant Osberne! said she; when next we meet I shall greet a knight renowned in combat! This idea darted to the soul of Osberne; emulation glowed on his cheek; the thought that he might merit
by

by his deeds the praise of Leofrida, made him now impatient even to bid her farewell; and gazing on the surcoat her own hands had wrought, This, cried he, is the signal of victory—a defence more potent than a corselet of adamant. He said no more, fearful that his unguarded lips should express the fervency of his admiration; and hastily bowing his head, followed the young Baron.

They mounted their steeds, and with many a lingering look advanced over the heath; the ladies ascended the highest turret of the castle, where they remained gazing long after they ceased to mark the distant waving of the crests on the casques of the youths. The Lady Editha sunk into dejection when she returned to her apartment, and Leofrida's tears were wiped away only by the remembrance of her purposed intrepidity in affliction.

Several

Several weeks had elapsed when the solitary quiet that reigned in the castle was disturbed by the arrival of an herald from the Earl of Lenox, succeeded by a band of soldiers. Surprise and terror agitated the gentle bosoms of the two ladies at this unexpected occurrence; but the alarm was increased when, the herald presenting a letter from the Earl, they were informed that the Baron de Lacy, between whom and the late Baron de Claire there had subsisted a long and inveterate enmity, occasioned by a dispute concerning the territorial boundaries of their domains, had made claims on the estates of the young Baron, which the Earl's strict regard to the interest of his ward would not allow him to admit; and that some unavoidable circumstances, which could not now be explained, had unawares brought on hostilities. The Baron threatened to lead out his vassals to war; and fears were entertained that the castle might undergo a siege. The Earl expressed his regret that the absence of

Sigefert

Sigefert so unfortunately prevented him from exerting his bravery in his own cause; but the whole care of the affair consequently devolving on his guardian, the Earl with parental anxiety would defend the property of his charge. Long and flattering professions were addressed to both the ladies; he requested them to trust implicitly in his protection; and informed them that he had provided a safe retreat, where they would avoid witnessing the horrors of a combat; and that in a few days he would send one of his most faithful adherents to guide them to this safe refuge.

Overcome with terror, the Lady Editha sunk on a seat in speechless distress; and Leofrida, who felt as keenly as her aunt the dreadful alarm, suppressed her own fears to animate the dejected mind of this affectionate and beloved relation. She found that her life, beginning thus in unpleasing events, would require dauntless resolution; and the nice discernment of her
under-

understanding told her; that the wavering propensity of her temper, which after the first impulse sunk into weariness of spirit, would prove her greatest foe. With an amiable resolution she therefore determined to combat this defect, and by steady efforts to implant in her mind that constancy without which every valuable grace loses its beauty.

The winning consolations of her beloved child (for as such she ever regarded her) insensibly allured the Lady Editha into a faint serenity.

With trembling apprehension the disconsolate females beheld the arrangements for battle. Destitute of a protector; their beloved Sigefert and his brave companion too far away to hear their sighs, or perhaps even to know the distress to which they were reduced;—consigned entirely to the care of an ambitious Noble, upon whose honour they knew not if they could rely,
they

they awaited the woes impending over their heads.

Four days after the dreadful alarm, as they were sitting in fearful expectation, in a small apartment of the tower that faced the heath, anxiously gazing to observe if any one approached the castle, they espied several horsemen rapidly advance. A chilling terror seized their frames, which a loud ringing at the great gates soon increased. In a few minutes they beheld the aged Mortimer enter the apartment. His venerable features were clouded by grief, and with a trembling tongue he informed them that a party of armed men were arrived in the name of the Earl of Lenox, to convey them to a place of safety, remote from the scene of combat. As he pronounced the words *a place of safety*, a glance of suspicion crossed the cheek of the faithful chamberlain. Leofrida shuddered, and the Lady Editha was silent for some time. Are not our damsels permitted to accom-

pany us? at length she asked.—Mortimer shook his head, and a tear, that dropped at the question, was his only answer. Let us stay, cried Leofrida, and suffer all the horrors of the battle, rather than be conveyed we know not whither. She was interrupted by a Page, who brought a letter from the Earl. The customary professions so wrought on the frank disposition of Lady Editha, that she deemed it treachery in herself to suspect him; but with fearful surprise she read, at the conclusion of the letter, that the arrangements of the enemy had been watched, and the safety of the ladies absolutely required that they should leave the castle this night. Were they to depart by day, there was danger of their being intercepted by the scouts of the foe. With much concern the Earl expressed his regret that the same motives of prudence forbade him to allow their attendant females to accompany them; but that in a few days he hoped to convey them also from the castle.

The

The weeping damsels crouded round their beloved ladies. The gentle Leofrida, as she bade them adieu, bestowed on each a small present, and committed them with tears and sighs to the protection of the good Mortimer. The Lady Editha, who found this trial almost too severe for her feeble fortitude, could only wave her hand to the dejected attendants; and with tottering steps she descended from the tower, followed by the trembling Leofrida and Mortimer.

In the inner court they beheld their escort. A person of an appearance noble, but somewhat ferocious, was the leader. Heworeahelmet shaded with black plumes, but no other armour; his vizor was up, and discovered a countenance naturally gloomy, but which tried to look courteously. A cloke of black cloth, edged with a narrow embroidery was suspended from his shoulders, which stooped, and occasioned

him to bear his head low. His doublet and sleeves were of a deep blood colour; and the dusky hue of his whole dress gave a forbidding air to his aspect.

The armed party consisted of only four or five stern-looking soldiers. They, as well as their chief, were not completely armed; but beside their casques, they wore corselets; they were armed with short javelins and swords. One of them held by the bridle two horses, richly accoutred, to convey the ladies.

Leofrida, and the weak spirited Lady Editha shuddered with apprehension as they gazed on their guides. The Chief approaching them, in a mild tone, but with scanty words, begged them to rely on the fidelity of the party ordered by the Earl of Lenox to guard them to security. Leofrida, in a low and faltering tone, desired to know whither they were to be led.
He

He looked still more gently, and replied, *To safety.* Not daring to venture another question, she turned from him, stretched out her hand to the old Mortimer, whose tottering limbs scarcely supported his distressed frame, and in a faint groan breathing the name of Sigefert, she was assisted to mount her steed.

The leader of the band himself placed the Lady Editha on the other horse; then vaulting on his own, placed his lance in its rest, and proceeded to the gate. The evening was now advanced to the thick darkness of approaching night; two of the soldiers, each bearing a torch, followed their chief; the ladies were placed in the middle, and the remaining horsemen closed the small train.

In generous concern for the sufferings of her beloved and ever maternal friend, the tender Leofrida disdained her own terrors, and by a fond consoling glance sought to

animate her courage. A grateful look, in reply, told her that her kind intention succeeded ; and she felt added strength invigorate her resolution.

They issued from the gate; and the trembling females remarked with dismay, that the Chief directed his steed to a route that led through the forest.

Afraid to turn their eyes backward, lest they should encounter the appalling looks of the soldiers in the rear, they yet stole a short and fearful glance at the towers and turrets that rose in mist through the gloom.

CHAP. IV.

———— Where, long and dark,
The tangled forest winds in deep recess,
Their path-way lies. —————

CROSSING a small area that intervened between the castle walls and the forest, the party entered the dreary shades, by the wide track that was generally used in passing to and from the castle.

The scene was solemn. The thickness of the boughs, twisting themselves into a gloomy expanse of foliage, entirely obscured the small remains of twilight, and all beneath was dark even to blackness. The red glare of the torches flashed as they passed on the nearest branches, while the deep recesses of shade grew still more appalling from (their contrast) the tremu-

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lous glimmering. The shrill and hollow-toned blasts roared in the heavy tops of the pines, with the hoarse noise of distant rushing waters. No sound of living animal was to be heard, except the shriek of some disturbed bird, or the timid tread of the solitary squirrel, frightened from his hole by the unusual light.

They continued for a considerable time in the same direction, till the road was divided and intersected by many smaller tracks. The ladies, little accustomed to quit the castle, were unacquainted with the paths of the forest; and had they been familiar to them, their knowledge could not have been serviceable, as they knew not whither they were going.

The Chief stopped, and seeming to hesitate as if to discover the right way, at length turned into a narrow path. Ancient heavy trees here formed a close avenue; their mouldering roots, clogged with clusters

ters of the creeping feather-moss, shot along the surface of the soil, and frequently obstructed the passage; while the trailing stems of the brambles entangled the feet of the horses.

A deeper emotion of fear sunk into the bosoms of the ladies, as their trembling hands, with difficulty, sought to force their steeds through the pass; and when they beheld their guide unsheath his faulchion, and slash away the briars, the sight of the bare weapon, though thus used to facilitate their passage, struck them with horror. At this instant, through an opening in the avenue occasioned by the fall of a large tree, the wind blew so violently, that the dancing flame of the tapers gave warning they were in danger of being extinguished. The soldiers who bore them stopped to trim them, and gave way to the ladies to pass on before. Not daring to delay, they followed the leader, whom they now heard for the first

time addressed by the name of Sir Gavaston. They advanced many paces; and turning backward an affrighted look, beheld the lingering torches glimmer faintly through some intervening branches. The leader now paused, and placing himself in a listening attitude, continued silent for a short time; then, in a low yet angry voice, he called to his men to hasten forward. The torch-bearers arrived first. Harken! said he, in an apprehensive tone—The startled females shuddered—I hear the sound of hoofs—it cannot proceed from the horses of your companions yonder.—The other soldiers now joined them.—Conceal yourselves behind these bushes and watch; the noise advances from the left.—He paused a while. A distant indistinct splashing, as of horses treading over marshy ground, was now heard by the whole party.

Our torches will betray us, said the leader

leader in a whispering tone ; hide them in your mantles. He then gently addressed the ladies : and bade them trust in a protector, unaccustomed to yield to either foe or robber. The assurance was of no avail. The feeble courage of the Lady Editha was nearly spent ; and Leofrida, throbbing with anguish for her weak state both of mind and body, advancing her steed near enough to grasp her hand, in a low whisper pronounced a short prayer. A feeble ejaculation from her aunt joined the pious petition : and clinging to each other as closely as they could, waited the event.

The foldiers, as directed, had raised their mantles over the torches on that side from whence the alarm proceeded ; the spot was consequently dark, except a partial glare which the half-smothered lights cast upon the ground. One of the men who was placed behind the bushes, now held up his javelin, as a signal that the noise drew nearer. The leader slowly

approaching the ladies, without dismounting, said softly, Fear not, gentle dames, we are in a commodious place; the thickness of the trees will defend us. He then took his station near the ambuscade. A tumultuous rustling among the leaves was now succeeded by a deep silence. One of the soldiers observing his torch burn faintly, and fearing it would be extinguished, now let drop his mantle to trim it; when the light shooting on the opposite trees, discovered, among the confused gloom, the points of several spears, directed against the party. Defend! exclaimed the leader, in a fierce accent. The concealed soldiers burst from their ambush; the others hurled down their torches; and the whole party followed their chief, who, with his lance couched, rushed among the brambles on the hidden enemies.

The feeble exertions of the Lady Editha were now at an end. Her hand could

no

no longer grasp the bridle; and with a faint shriek she fell from her horse. Leofrida had now to sustain a double terror (the agitation of her mind keeping her ideas in a continued tumult, preventing her from fainting) she leaped from her steed, and raising her wretched friend, placed her gently on the grass, at the foot of a vast tree. She seated herself by her, and tenderly resting her head upon her shoulder, they remained in mute suspense.

A loud and hollow din of the clashing of spears and furious voices, was heard for some time. The deserted females dared not once to lift their eyes; but had they gazed, the darkness and perplexity of the underwood would have concealed the real state of the combat.

A dreadful silence now ensued; Leofrida ventured to look up, and beheld a knight of a stern aspect advance hastily
from

from the spot where the parties encountered. He seized the steeds which the wretched females had quitted, and desired them to mount; informing them they were the prisoners of the Baron De Lacy. Another stranger in the same instant appeared, and snatched one of the torches, which still burnt upon the ground. Sir Gavaston and his party were no more to be seen; and in the midst of her terrors, Leofrida could not help wondering that their intrepid guides had so soon been subdued. Not knowing whether they should consider this occurrence as a rescue or a new misfortune, the distressed ladies suffered themselves to be again seated on their steeds; which the strange knight, who was on foot, led by the bridle. The other man, seemingly a kind of page, bore the torch before them. They proceeded as hastily as the walking pace of their new guide would allow, and soon gained a track, nearly as wide as that by which they entered the forest.

Once

Once more consigned to the care of persons, of whose good faith they were not assured, and who were still more to be suspected than their former guides, the unfortunate sister and daughter of the late brave Baron De Claire, found themselves in the hands of his ancient enemy..

Having travelled for some hours, they issued at length from the forest. The morning twilight faintly gleamed on a vast expansion of desolate hills; a soft light here and there tinted the tufts of scattered thickets; while the blue mists, not yet chased by the sun, united all in uniform harmony. Leofrida felt revived as she quitted the horrid shade, and entered the open country; but she gazed in vain for some inhabited spot. We shall soon arrive at the castle, said the knight, who had not spoke before; and turning short from the strait direction, entered a narrow glen. As they proceeded.

ceeded, the road, which was a path little frequented, descended rapidly. Rocks rose high on each side, whose grey clefts were fringed with bunches of the glossy spleenwort, while from their sharp and overhanging tops, thin solitary groves of sapling pines fantastically grew in various directions, as their roots found the sandy soil they love. The path winding round the bottom of a rough steep, discovered to the view of the wretched captives, the place whither they were to be led. Half-concealed in a recess of frowning mountains, they espied a large castle. The duskiness of the dawn, which threw an indistinct shade over the outlines of the structure, left imagination to measure the height and breadth of the towers. The solitary edifice, thus remotely situated, seemed to couch beneath the canopy of the surrounding mass of steeps, and hid in ambush to wait for prey.

Overcome

Overcome with terror and fatigue, the unhappy ladies beheld the scene with dread; but it was a dread mingled with the stupor of minds wearied by their own surmises.

The knight advanced to the castle, and rung loudly at the gate; a porter appeared, who, without speaking, assisted the ladies to dismount. The fainting Lady Editha, supported by the nearly as feeble Leofrida, now entered a spacious guard-chamber. Here the porter carefully barring the door, left them, followed by the knight. Their strength spent by the length and the horror of their journey, and with apprehensions more keen than ever, they sat down in a niche of the massy hall.

The yet remaining obscurity of the dawn, rendered more dim by the small grated aperture, whose pointed arches told they were windows, hindered them from discerning the real appearance of the apartment.

In

In a short time the knight returned, and in a voice of authority desired them to follow him. Fear supplied the force that Nature now denied, and they dragged their tottering feet whither he directed.

He left the guard-chamber, and turning through a wide vaulted passage, entered a spacious apartment: here he requested the ladies to seat themselves on a covered bench;—they obeyed; and he paced the room backward and forward for some time. The same porter who admitted them into the castle now appeared, bringing refreshments; he placed them before the languid females, who eagerly seized the invigorating morsel. After resting their trembling limbs for near half an hour, the knight, who all the time remained in the apartment, made a signal for them to rise, and led the way to a door at the farthest extremity of the chamber. He opened it, and entered a small space, from which ascended a flight of narrow steps. The trembling females
now

now considered themselves really prisoners. Remonstrance as well as resistance was in vain. The first stair-case was succeeded by several other, as if leading from story to story of some lofty tower; a dim light, admitted through the loop-holes on every landing place, just served to shew the prison-like appearance of the place, and to direct the steps of the unfortunate captives.

The knight at length stopped and unclosed a door, which sinking deep from the surface of the wall, discovered its vast and massy breadth.

'This is your abode, said he; you will be courteously treated. So saying he retired, barring the door. The clanking of a heavy chain which he fastened across on the outside, struck a chilling horror to the hearts of the illustrious captives, and they stood for some time in speechless agony. Leofrida was the first to survey the apartment; it was small; the walls were of bare stone, but clean; a small window inserted

in a thick arched frame of rude carvings, admitted, from the great height of the tower, sufficient light to give to the place a kind of gloomy cheerfulness. A neat couch was placed on the opposite side, with a small table, and a lamp ready trimmed.

The young, the tender daughter of a great and renowned house, thus beheld herself, by a strange, an unforeseen reverse of fortune, in a single night conveyed from splendour and affluence, from the beloved home of her family, to the want and woes of captivity in an unknown castle. When the tumult of her anguish had somewhat subsided, placing her hand on her bosom, she heaved a prayer, that the Supreme Guardian of mortals would bestow on her patient resignation. As her fingers prest her mantle, they touched the shred of velvet that contained the motto wrought by her mother. An impulse of virtuous fortitude instantly darted through her soul; she drew it out, kissed it, and falling on her

her knees, breathed a silent vow of resignation ; then rising, with endearing tenderness she consoled the beloved partner of her affliction. The mind of Lady Editha, ever noble and good, though weakened by suffering, caught the animating influence, but the sensation soon died away. Keen anxiety for the safety of her beloved companion, together with a thousand painful surmises, ruffled her exerted composure ; and while a patient serenity tranquillized the young and sanguine Leofrida, her more experienced aunt found present distress, and apprehended evil foes almost too potent for her languid faculties.

She could not, nevertheless, resist the tender consolations of her lovely comforter ; who placing her on the couch, kneeled down before her, and grasping her hands, raised them with her own to heaven. In this attitude they continued till they heard the noise of footsteps ascending the stairs.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

———— With anguish faint,
 If ever the fresh gale she sought to breathe,
 Frown'd the bleak battlement and guarded wall,
 And mark'd her limits. Thro' each stony chink,
 Form'd on the near approaching foe to pour
 The arrowy storm, on these wild banks she gaz'd,
 While Fancy, minister of woe, with hand
 Officious, to her view presented still
 Gay troops of forest deer, unprison'd airs
 Inhaling, and as frolic sport inspir'd,
 Bounding unfetter'd.

GISBORNE'S *Walks in a Forest*.

THE chain clanked, the key creaked
 in the lock, and an old man, in the
 habit of a domestic vassal, made his ap-
 pearance. He brought a neat, but frugal
 repast, which he placed on the table and
 retired. Leofrida's insinuating affection
 persuaded the faint Lady Editha to taste
 the refreshment; she gently lifted to her
 lips

lips the small chalice of wine, and with her own hand selected the choicest morsels of the broiled fish.

That piety which had taught them to partake with gratitude the rich banquet, instructed them also to raise to Heaven a look of thankfulness while they ate the pittance of the prisoner.

When they had finished the short repast, Leofrida with a condescending grace folded the napkin, and arranged the vessels and dishes in neat order in the apartment. She then persuaded Lady Editha to recline on the couch, and endeavoured to lull her into much wanted repose. Tired Nature assisted her kind efforts, and gave way to a short restless slumber. Leotrida seated herself on the floor by the couch, and with tender solicitude watched the continuation of this poor respite from suffering.

Placing

Placing her head on her hand, she fell into a train of musing, seeking to fortify her soul, and render it steady in its resolves. The remembrance of her brother, of his absence, shot across her heart. O Sigefert! if you saw me thus!—exclaimed she; and you, brave and amiable Osberne! what would even these ponderous walls avail to keep you from rescuing us!

The involuntary exclamation, though uttered in a broken voice, awaked the Lady Editha; the suspension of thinking had in some measure restored her powers. She beheld the heroic efforts of the young Leofrida, and felt a tint of self-reproach gently steal into her soul. She determined to try if reason and meditation could not instil a fortitude more meritorious than that natural vigour of mind which spurns at calamity, even without the admonitions of the understanding. The heroic resolution brought with it a faint touch of comfort; and when the aged domestic

appeared in the evening with their scanty supper, she was sufficiently calm to examine his aspect. His looks were much softer than those of the knight and the porter; and there was seen in his countenance that composure so becoming to old age. Leofrida gently requested him to kindle their lamp. He complied with mildness, and as he quitted the apartment, threw a wishful glance on the amiable captives. This relenting demeanour was a welcome consolation to them; and reposing themselves on their couch, a sweet sleep, the reward of conscious resignation, recompensed their noble exertions.

Soon as the red dawn gleamed through the small casement they arose, and kneeling down, offered their matin devotions. The Lady Editha had carefully treasured in her pocket, when she left the castle, a small missal; from this they repeated prayers to the martyrs; animating their own courage by meditating on the tortures of

the blessed Saint Appolonia, and the holy Francis. The little illuminated pictures represented, as present to their view, the illustrious female patiently suffering the fatal pincers to sever her tongue; and the pious father receiving on his palms and feet the wounds that agonized his hallowed master.

This religious exercise shed over their souls that calm and exalted comfort, the peculiar privilege of piety; and they accepted with benignant countenances, from the hands of the still silent, though gentle-looking domestic, their morning repast.

This over, Leofrida for the first time advanced to the window, and found herself struck at once with awe and interest by the singular grandeur and wild gloominess of the prospect it commanded. An immense mass of steeples appeared in tumultuous disorder thronging together; the rolling mists that covered them with a dim haze, gave them the undulation of waves; and

and they might have been justly stiled a sea of mountains. Some of the nearer crags were crested with points of rock, broken into fantastic shapes of turrets, or shattered walls. High on the pinnacle of a lofty summit on the left, that seemed exalted almost beyond the reach of human foot, stood a solitary watch-tower. In silent admiration, Leofrida, who was now joined by the Lady Editha, gazed on these stupendous works of Nature. All was solemnly silent : she thought at length that she heard a hollow murmur, as of waters, and looking carefully round, found that the scene was in the vicinity of the sea ; for beyond the rock of the watch-tower she could just discern a narrow space of the green ocean. Loud blasts, as if they were the shrieks of the spirit of the mountains, gave notice of an approaching storm. The prospect now partook at once of terror and awful beauty. The heavy clouds scudding over the sky and steepes, and parting frequently, discovered the towering

summit of a mountain, while they involved its base, and gave it the appearance of a vast fabric suspended in the air. The sail of a reeling skiff was now and then observed waving on the distant stretch of the main; but the objects that most engaged the attention of Leofrida were the files of marine birds, which arranging themselves in lines, seemed with mutual bravery to urge their course through the storm. In more undetermined journey the sportive sea-gull would seem to gambol with the winds; spreading her silky grey plumes to the blast, she suffered it to bear her in its track.

These appearances for a considerable time diverted the thoughts of the gentle captives; though as they felt, or fancied they felt, the tower that inclosed them rock its heavy parapet in the blast, they shuddered, and remembered they were prisoners.

With

With patience, which if it suffered a short relapse was soon restored, in the pleasingly anxious discourse of Sigefert and Osberne; and in hope eagerly indulged by the one, and soberly cherished by the other, the amiable partners in misfortune passed several weeks. Leofrida, in unnumbered little arts and devices, called into action by tender assiduity, encouraged and supported the fortitude of her aunt. Even in the dreary solitude she found means to beguile the dull hours; for her purposeful perseverance in resignation had not yet sunk into lassitude. She loved to sit and watch the light sail of the distant vessel, that skimmed swiftly out of sight; and Fancy would paint it as freighted with the much-regretted knights, her beloved brother and his brave friend, hastening to her rescue.

At evening she constantly measured the hour by tracing the signal-lights that glimmered from the watch-tower.

One evening, when the old domestic made his wonted appearance at the stated hour, he glided under the dish which he brought, a folded paper, and then in more haste than usual withdrew. With impatient curiosity Leofrida snatched the paper, and with mingled joy and wonder read an epistle from the Earl of Lenox. It contained expressions of the keenest regret at the unhappy accident that had placed in the power of their enemy the Lady Editha and the young sister of his ward. He lamented that the open hostilities in which he was now engaged with the Baron de Lacy, prevented him from delivering them by any other means than either attacking the castle, or conveying them from it by stratagem. He had chosen the latter way as less dangerous to females, and bade them rely on his protection, and trust in the old domestic.

Is he then our friend? exclaimed Leofrida.

frida. Is the guardian of Sigefert faithful to his trust?

Our suspicions have surely wronged him, replied the lady Editha. This care of us, looks not like the action of a foe. We will, as he bids us, rely on his protection, my child!—and let us intreat Heaven to pardon the injustice of our surmises.

The fond idea of deliverance; of once more returning to liberty and security, revived their souls. They thanked Providence for discovering to the Earl the place of their confinement, which they supposed he learned from Sir Gavaston and his men, who fled from the Baron's party in the forest.

Shall we trust in the old domestic? asked Léofrida. Undoubtedly, replied Lady Editha; many dangers we must unavoidably encounter; but they will be less

dreadful than long and hopeless captivity in this dreary castle.

In trembling anxiety, between expectation and fear, they awaited the next appearance of the domestic. He came in the morning, somewhat earlier than his customary hour.

I hazard much—said he, breaking his long silence;—but the unhappy fate of ladies so noble forbids me to regard myself. They thanked the old man with condescending gratitude, and begged to know by what means they were to escape. This evening, returned he, an hour after sunset, uncloset the casement of your window, and when you shall see shot into this apartment an arrow with a silver head, prepare to depart. Take this key, it will unlock your door; I will leave the chain unfastened; you must descend the stairs without your lamp: in the apartment that leads to the stair-case of this tower is a secret door
opening

opening on the platform; here I will take care to meet you, and at a convenient distance a trusty Esquire and two Pages belonging to the Earl of Lenox will wait for you with steeds.

He said no more, but retired, leaving the captives startled at the difficulty of the enterprize, yet resolved to surmount it by resolution and precaution.

They passed the day in painful anxiety, seeking to sustain their fortitude by acts of devotion. Leofrida watched the sinking sun-beams as they slowly declined behind the watch-tower; a purple misty haze now took possession of the western glow, and she tremblingly looked below to discern the hand from which the arrow was to be darted. She perceived on the platform a person in a long black cloke pacing slowly backward and forward. He frequently raised his eyes towards the summit of the tower, then heedfully surveyed the lower

walls of the structure. At length stopping short, he drew from beneath his cloke a bow. Leofrida hastily retired from the window, and at the farthest extremity of the apartment waited the appointed signal. In a few minutes a small light shaft sprung with whizzing flight through the casement, and alighted on the floor. Leofrida took it up; it was a thin wand of polished yew, crested with a barbed head of silver.

There is no time to lose, said she, in a faltering tone. The Lady Editha, tottering with fear, sunk upon the couch, and Leofrida was forced to exert all her courage to animate and console her. She gently took her arm, and raising her with one hand, while with the other she held out the key of their prison,—Be Heaven our guide! she ejaculated, and proceeded to the door. The Lady Editha felt herself held back, as if by an irresistible impulse; her feet seemed to refuse to pass the threshold.

threshold. The time of escape will pass by, repeated Leofrida. At this suggestion she proceeded involuntarily. They inserted the key, and gently unclosed the massy door; then with feet that scarcely dared to touch the steep and narrow steps, they descended the dark stair-case.

CHAP. VI.

————— Thro' subterranean cells,
Where searching sun-beams scarce can find a way.

THOMSON.

A Faint glimmering of light, appeared through the loop-holes in the ponderous walls, yet reached not the stairs; as if it refused to direct the affrighted captives where to place their trembling feet.

They gained at length the bottom of the stair-case, and with difficulty discerned the door leading to the apartment in which they rested when they were brought to the castle. Leofrida first advanced to the door, to listen for some signal from their deliverer. All was still; she placed her hand on the door, when the dreary
silence

silence was broken, by the echo of steps slowly treading within: she shuddered and retired. All was again silent. Again she ventured to touch the door; it gave way, and they softly stole into the apartment. It was of large extent; and being lighted from windows that looked into a small inner court, which was gloomy from the height of the surrounding buildings, it displayed, even in the day, a dusky hue; but now, from the darkness of the evening, the heavy trophies that adorned its walls were scarcely distinguishable. They wore an indistinct appearance, that left fancy room to form the dim waving folds of the military banners into strange terrific shapes, moving backward and forward. They stopped in fearful suspense; they imagined something resembling human proportion drew nigh from the far end of the apartment; they now in reality discerned a person, whom they supposed to be the old domestic. They advanced to meet him; and as he stopped

stopped near one of the windows, they observed him to wear a rich cap of dark violet colour, and a cloke of the same, splendidly decorated. They started. Seek you to escape, fair dames? said he, in a voice stern and taunting; then know, that it is not the use of a victorious chief, so easily to resign his captives! Through respect to your rank, you have hitherto been treated with lenient clemency; but you will now know that this castle has walls and dungeons that mock stratagem. Stunned with terror, the gentle prisoners, thus unexpectedly surprized, stood in speechless stupor. Leofrida by a vigorous effort, roused strength sufficient to intreat, in a tone of the softest supplication, that they might be conveyed back to their former prison. No, said the Baron De Lacy, a place more impervious to art and treachery must now confine you, till final triumph shall decide your fate. Approach, called he, in a voice of authority; and two men, in the habit of war-

warriors, made their appearance. The Baron retiring, they seized the defenceless females, and hurried them through the door leading to the inner court.

Here they waited a short time, till a third person, bearing a lamp, joined them; in whose features Leofrida discovered the porter, who admitted them into the castle.

He advanced first, and led the way through a small portal, into a spacious passage. Supporting each other with painful exertion, the wretched captives followed; he soon turned beneath a wide circular arch, and descended a vaulted staircase: it consisted at first of stone-steps; but, as if sinking deep into the bowels of the earth, the stairs at the lower part, by their unevenness and irregular shape, seemed as if hewn in the rock.

They

They gained at length the bottom; and the floor was sometimes solid rock, and sometimes paved with blocks of rude stone. With fear, that was now deepened into horror, the wretched ladies beheld themselves led into vaults that stretched their unknown mysterious recesses far beneath the surface of the earth. The porter advanced many paces into these dreary caverns, till the rock closed round a door, whose massy beams vied in solidity with the strong walls. He unclosed it, and the warriors led the captives into a narrow but lofty cell.

The Lady Editha, entirely overcome, sunk senseless on the pavement; and the speechless agony of Leofrida, who cast a look of anxiety on the lamp, as the warriors were retiring, won even their obduracy to relent. We are acquainted with the passages, said the porter, and can find our way; let us leave the lamp. A grateful

ful glance from Leofrida thanked him for this considerate kindness.

The guides withdrew, and the young distressed damsel, throwing herself on the ground by the side of her overwhelmed companion, tried to revive her. She soon raised her eyes to survey the horrors and the hopelessness of her situation. The cell was destitute of furniture, except a coarse mattress; the roof was arched, but so high that, no light falling upon it, this dark abode appeared a terrific shapeless space. Half way up the arch of the roof, a narrow grate admitted a scanty supply of light and air; and on the opposite side was a thin slit, in the almost immeasurable wall, which shewed not for what purpose it could possibly have been formed. A night of unspeakable agony was passed by the captives, though it was not increased by the knowledge of the Earl's treachery; who had, in secret concert with his pretended foe, contrived this artful

artful stratagem to imprison them beyond the reach of rescue.

The Lady Editha by turns fell into torpor and severe distress. The lively, still vigorous soul of the young Leofrida, supported this dreadful accident with all the ardour of her purposed fortitude. An impulse of conscious exultation rewarded and encouraged her efforts ; and she fancied she felt the admonitory motto press softly on her bosom, in token of approbation. The dejected state of her revered companion touched her with the keenest pangs.

She tried to awaken that resolution which she had seen her exert in their first captivity ; yet so gently delicate were her suggestions, that their force was felt without being distinguished from self-resolve. The morning twilight lowred through the heavy-barred grate, and discovered better than the fullen glare of the lamp, the dreary

dreary obscurity of this new prison. Leofrida rose from the ground, mindful of the hour of matin prayer; they kneeled; but their petitions were only expressed by a supplicating sigh, or a silent tear.

The fainting powers of nature at length began to give warning, that they required that refreshing sustenance which renews the frame for action. They listened if the sound of steps ran along the hollow cavities of the vaults: not the slightest noise transpired; and the hideous, the overwhelming idea, that they were inclosed in this den to perish—to perish by the most torturing of deaths—started across the imagination. The busy fancy of Leofrida painted, with horrid minuteness, the thin shrunken limbs stretched gasping on the cold floor;—the unsupplied cavity of the stomach contracting with agonizing grasp—and pursued the dreadful picture till it scattered the bare unburied bones over the pavement of the cell. Shuddering at these

these dreadful images, a deadly paleness had whitened her features, when a noise was heard at the small aperture in the roof. They supposed it the rustling of some night-bird, seeking a retreat from the light; but discovered, as they gazed, something let down into the cell. It was a small wicker basket suspended from an iron chain; which descending slowly, rested on the ground. Leofrida sprung lightly to seize it: it contained some dried fish, a few wheaten cakes, and a small pitcher of water.

She took out the welcome, though provident stores with a pious glance towards Heaven. We shall not be left a prey to famine! exclaimed she. Eat, my mother! for so she loved to call the Lady Editha. Let us live. Let us reserve ourselves for happiness. Sigefert! thou must surely discover we are slaves! The last idea, with the joy of finding their dreadful apprehensions of dying by hun-

hunger visionary, rendered the coarse, the scanty meal, a flavoured banquet.

Several days past, and the basket regularly descended. The patient captives accepted the pittance, even with gratitude; and found their resignation increase.

The Lady Editha viewed with admiration the heroic courage of Leofrida, and though her own efforts were more painful, more slow and faint, she still struggled; and still found the struggle blest with self-approbation.

With poignant regret, as evening approached, Leofrida frequently surveyed the extinguished lamp. Even this poor lamp, said she, would cheer our long and painful nights, could we but procure oil! Lady Editha sighed; but regarded the wish with a despair that entered not the mind of her young companion; whose busy invention soon devised a scheme to
obtain

obtain the object of her wish. The next time their provision descended, she tore a narrow shred from the border of her garment, and wove it artfully into the wicker twigs of the basket, in form of the three letters in the word OIL; carefully wrapping, within the small folds, a ring, which contained a jewel of great value. She hoped this precious trifle, cheaply bartered for the valuable advantage of light, would procure a benefit she dared not to expect from mere compassion.

In eager expectation and terror, lest her little plot should be frustrated, she awaited the next falling of the basket. The device was understood, the present accepted by the mercenary keeper, and Leofrida with transport found, hid among the provisions, a pitcher of oil, and a prepared wick for her lamp. She ran in rapture to trim it; when her trance of delight was interrupted, by a question from the Lady Editha, how was it to be lighted?

Con-

Confounded and perplexed, she stood a while surpris'd at her inadvertency, in having, through the ardour of expectation, forgot this material circumstance. But Leofrida scorn'd to despair. The basket was not yet drawn up: she hastily seized it, and pursuing her new discovered method of tracing characters, swiftly interwove the word LIGHT.

But this new favour must be obtained by a new gratification. A small casket of valuable stores she had conveyed from the castle De Claire; another jewel was therefore selected from this useful treasury, and inserted in the woven letters.

Evening approached, and Leofrida, in trembling expectation, watched the aperture. Either the basket was later than its usual hour ere it descended, or her impatience measured not the time exactly. The gloom of the cell grew deeper; and she believed that her stratagem had been
disco-

discovered. At length the joyful signal was heard; the basket descended, and fastened to the chain hung a small splinter of fir-tree lighted.

Triumphing in the success of her invention, Leofrida trimmed and lighted her lamp; then spreading their provisions on the floor, which was their only table, she then joyfully sat down to supper by the light she had so dearly purchased. This was the most cheerful meal they had yet eaten in their solitary den; the horrors at least that fancy ever paints when aided by darkness, were dissipated.

They conversed, as they took their allotted morsel, with calm tranquillity: they talked of Sigefert; of Osberne; and they dared to hope. The Lady Editha rejoiced in their new acquisition, as well from the cheerful light it diffused, as from motives of piety; she could now see to read her missal; and, while Leofrida collected

lected the fragments of their repast, she opened her book, and sought the consolations of religion. She pursued her meditations for a long time; and Leofrida, loth to break the train of her reflections, continued silent, examining, for the first time, the height and extent of their cell. She rose; and, thinking the exercise of walking would strengthen her limbs, and animate the spirits, that stagnate from inactivity, she paced lightly backward and forward.

The cell was arched; and the farthest arch bent low towards the earth. Leofrida turning under it, started back with affright; she perceived a door. Her exclamation of surprise roused the Lady Editha from her meditations. She rose, and hastened to discover the alarm. By the aid of their lamp they examined the wall, and found by bearing against the door, that it was unfastened. Suspended between hope and fear, they knew not whe-

ther to rejoice at the circumstance, or to consider it as the prelude to some new danger.

They shrunk back from opening it, lest they should plunge into unknown snares; yet to leave this passage unexplored would be to remain in ceaseless apprehension and insecurity.

They desisted, at length, from the attempt, and passed that night in mingled fear and curiosity.

Several days elapsed; and Leofrida, with constant care, supplied her lamp; frequently carrying it to survey the newly discovered door, without once daring to push it back.

One night as the patient captives were sitting in pensive silence, loud tempestuous blasts of wind roared over their heads, and seemed to rock even the deep foundations

daions of their prison. Hollow rustling noises were heard to echo in the space beyond the door; and they frequently cast that way an affrighted look. At length a blast more furious than the former drove violently on the door from within, and left it half-open. Fear, and a wish to discover whither it led, for some time contested for the pre-eminence; victorious curiosity at last carried Leofrida to the door; and the Lady Editha, from motives of affection, followed. Holding the lamp in one hand, the trembling damsel with the other gently touched the door. Its hoarse creaking, and the reverberation of the wind within, startled her fancy with a thousand visionary terrors; she dared, notwithstanding, to place one foot over the decayed threshold, and raising the lamp, whose wavering flame danced to the blast, she observed several broken steps, leading into a spacious crypt.

She descended ; the Lady Editha followed, but trembled so much that she sat down on the last stair. Her young and more courageous companion advanced into this remote and secret space ; perhaps unknown even to the owner of the castle.

The wind continued to blow ; and the light of the lamp consequently falling in partial glimmerings, but imperfectly displayed the crossed vaulting of the roof, which rested on two rows of heavy pillars. Their short shafts gave them the appearance of uncommon breadth, and their rudely carved capitals were adorned with the uncouth figures of the Saxon crown. The walls were of ponderous stone, plain and undecorated.

Leofrida growing more assured as she advanced, still stepped forward ; and gazing round, sought to discover where
the

the blasts of wind had found entrance. She proceeded between the pillars, and, at the farthest extremity, discerned an aperture in the roof, occasioned by the falling in of a large stone: it was nearly choaked by the straggling filaments of the wiry cupthong, and the tenacious stems of the ivy.

This circumstance indicated that the vault, in which the unhappy captives were confined, stretched far from the castle walls, beneath some thicket or heath. Leofrida's apprehensions were now changed to joy. She considered the discovery of this vault as a happiness; it extended the limits of their confinement, and afforded, through the disjointed stones, a passage for the refreshing breeze. The Lady Editha now hastened to join her; and after contemplating the place for some time, they re-

turned to their cell, pleased at thus obtaining a new apartment; for the solitary, obscure vault was to them a cheerful saloon.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

A Maid so fav'd, if but by Nature blest
 With common charms, had soon awak'd a flame
 More strong than pity, in that melting heart
 Which pity warm'd before.

MASON'S *English Garden*.

LEOFRIDA was one day walking in the Saxon vault, meditating with fondly-cherished hope on her much-loved brother and his brave companion, when she was startled by a rustling among the entangled briars that closed the opening in the roof. She looked up; they seemed to be displaced by some unseen hand, and a small white Alpine hare was let down. She pursued the timid visitant as it ran affrighted between the pillars; at length she caught it, and with gentle careffes tried to quiet the tears it so needlessly felt. As she examined the downy coat, now whitened

to the most snowy hue*, she perceived a paper suspended to its neck by the long leaf of a bullrush. She flew with the letter and its gentle messenger to the Lady Editha. They opened it impatiently, and read as follows:

“ It is not the custom of one, whose profession and hallowed oath command him to succour the injured, to redress their wrongs by any other means than the open and glorious road of arms; but reasons, sacred to his honour, forbid the Knight who laments the woes of the sister and aunt of the young Baron de Claire, from rescuing them by that sword, whose greatest glory is to protect innocence. If the illustrious captives will condescend to accept that aid which alone he can bestow, to-morrow night, when they hear the first centinel change his watch, let them pace

* For an account of the Alpine hare, see Pennant's Tour in Scotland.

three times the vault adjoining their cell :
The signal will be waited for, and they
shall be safely conveyed from the castle."

Leofrida clasped her hands, and in an ecstasy of delight offered her pious acknowledgments to Heaven for thus rescuing them from the horrors of captivity. The Lady Editha with calmer joy joined in the grateful thanks.—Yes! my child, said she, we will accept the assistance of this generous unknown friend. We will fear no farther treachery. The terms he uses seem dictated by honour and sincerity. But who can he be? asked Leofrida. O Sigefert! next to thy Osberne he shall be thy most valued friend.—Where, indeed, replied the Lady Editha, but from the pity of Heaven, could we, unprotected as we are, find such aid! Perchance the good Mortimer has sought us out. But our deliverer is a Knight—replied Leofrida.

They dwelt not long on these conjectures;

tures, soon turning their thoughts to the dark prospect that hung over them even when they should escape from the castle; the transport of once more beholding the cheerful day—of returning to liberty—chased the anxiety for the future.

Leofrida congratulated herself that she had sustained the keen griefs of her captivity with resignation. A soft commendation secretly creeping through her soul, refined and exalted her present delight, by telling her it was deserved. The Lady Editha, whose exertions had been more painful, experienced too a sweet consciousness. The native vigour of her soul, which her misfortune had lulled into lethargy, in some measure returned. “You feel, my dear child, said she to Leofrida; what an exquisite refinement of delight self-approbation can bestow on every blessing. The affliction with which your life thus begins, you sustain with fortitude as glorious as it is sweet to yourself. But you
are

are yet young ; I know by fatal experience that a series of woes may weaken that energy of mind which is the foundation of happiness. Preserve then that sedate steadiness in patient suffering which alone merits and obtains the esteem of your own heart, and the veneration of every amiable soul. Let the last woe you shall endure be borne, if not with equal spirit, at least with equal calmness as the first you encountered."

Leofrida listened with grateful complacency to this admonition ; and while she imprinted on her mind in the living characters of memory, the word FORTITUDE, she impressed with all her force its glorious counterpart PERSISTENCE.

This day and night, and the succeeding day, were past in anxious expectation. Though the cell was far from the walls of the castle, yet there the hollow tones of the sentinels were easily heard. The captives,

soon to be no more captives ! listened carefully for the appointed signal. Leofrida, for the last time trimmed her lamp, and gave to the white hare, which had for these two days been her cherished companion, the last cake the constant basket supplied.

Before they left their cell they offered to Heaven a prayer of gratitude; and as they entered the door of the crypt, they threw a look of satisfaction on that scene of captivity, whose horrors they had borne with resignation. A tear of serene delight fell on that floor which they had never moistened with the tears of repining. The Lady Editha sat down on the stairs, while Leofrida with slow and stately steps paced three times the length of the vault. Then leaving her lamp on the pavement near the aperture in the roof, which she supposed was the outlet through which they were to escape, she returned to her aunt, and they waited in calm, yet anxious expectation, the means that should be

be presented for their delivery. A low noise was soon heard at the aperture, as of removing the bushes; and in a few minutes a small ladder, used in escalade when the attack was directed against low walls, was let down. They hastened to the spot; the Lady Editha ascended first, with fearful yet steady steps. Leofrida, who would not leave the little animal which had been the instrument of her rescue, to perish in the dungeon from which it restored her, tried to ascend holding it in her arms. The steepness of the position in which the ladder stood, which could not, from the aperture being in the bending of the arched roof, rest against the wall, prevented her from thus proceeding; and scorning to let fall her gentle friend, she was obliged to descend. The voice of the Lady Editha, in accents of piercing anxiety, chided this delay; but Leofrida was steady in her gratitude; she folded the white hare carefully in her mantle, and suspending it round her neck was going again to ascend—when, as she placed her

she reluctantly swallowed it, not selfish repining, but the tears of alarmed affection rendered the morsel bitter.

The last sacred advice of her honoured mother helped to revive her drooping soul; and fortitude in her own misfortunes was now not a difficult task. But terror and alarm at the separation from her constant friend and guide, rankled in her tender heart; and a tumult of surmises at this last occurrence, the most strange of all the mysterious train of afflictions she had lately suffered, confused her restless ideas. Thus she passed the day, and evening approached. The darkness of these subterranean spaces recalled her thoughts to her almost extinguished lamp. She flew to trim it, and drained the last drop of oil from her pitcher. The scanty supply scarce fed the feeble flame, and she feared to lose this poor consolation. Am I then doomed, cried she, to pine an unpitied captive in these dungeons! In solitude, darkness, and
ever-

ever-ceaseless anxiety for the fate of those I most love, must I exist, buried from their search? Agonizing as was this idea, Leonfrida was still ardent; still resolved to support suffering, and to deserve at least to suffer no more.

She carried her small supper into the crypt, her favourite apartment; and sitting down beneath a pillar, with her little companion by her side, she raised her eyes to Heaven, and could have eaten it with satisfaction; but the memory of her much-loved companion started across her soul. Yet perhaps she is safe, cried she—is rescued from the wretchedness in which I am so strangely left.—A train of pious musing then solemnized her thoughts, and led her from scenes of human woe to future felicity.

Lost in her meditations, she was become almost insensible to the present objects, when a loud clanking, as of shaken armour,

mour, echoed through the vault. She started, and looking round, perceived on the ground a folded parcel, and something that glittered. They had been thrown through the aperture; she hastened to take them up, and found a long furcoat, such as worn by warriors when the weather is inclement, and a helmet without the bearer; a mantling of purple silk was fastened to the casque; and as she took it up, she discerned written on the inside of the vizor, "Trust once more—the Lady Editha is safe—to-night at midnight wear the cloke and helmet, and wait at the door of the cell."

Yes! Heaven protects us! exclaimed the transported Leofrida—thou art safe my beloved partner!—the generous unknown will restore me to thee.—With more impatience than she had ever experienced before, she waited for the appointed hour. She knew the time of night by the watchword of the centinels; but long before midnight

midnight she arrayed herself in the furcoat, and placed the helmet on her head, folding the mantling over her face. She had just finished her disguise when the twilight that glimmered through the cell gave notice that her lamp was expiring. She gazed wishfully, yet without regret, on the fading light, and had scarcely secured her little hare beneath her furcoat when the last flash of the lamp danced on the walls. Impenetrable gloom, and silence unbroken, now reigned in these remote vaults. She sat down near the door of the cell, carefully listening to catch the distant footsteps. She waited long in vain—at length she thought a hollow echo ran along the vaults; it drew nearer, and the tread of some one approaching was distinguishable. The bolts of the door moved; it opened, and Leofrida beheld a Knight with his visor down, bearing in one hand a torch. He made a profound obeisance, without speaking, and lifted his hand as a signal for her to follow. She obeyed. With courteous yet respectful care he removed each

each rough stone that obstructed the passage; and Leofrida fearlessly trusted in the integrity of her guide. They passed the vaults, ascended the successive flights of stairs, and gained the little court which the captives crossed when they were conveyed to the cell. The stranger here turned to a small door that sunk in the wall between two massy buttresses. He unclosed it, and Leofrida with transport beheld by the light of his torch the mountains, the tangled bushes, and rocky ground that surrounded the castle. The Knight carefully fastened the door, and advancing towards the mountains, begged Leofrida, in a low voice, to displace the mantling of her helmet, so that the crest might be discerned. As she threw a look of transport on the prison from which she was rescued, the dim figures of the centinels moving on the turrets, gave her to understand the reason of this precaution. She was, by the waving of the plumes on her casque, to be taken for a Knight.

The

The stranger turned into a small thicket; he passed hastily through it, and when they issued into the more open space, the castle was no more to be seen. Here they found waiting a Squire, with two horses; on one Leofrida was placed, and the Knight mounted the other, giving the torch to the Squire.

Leofrida, before she ascended the saddle, uncovered her little hidden favourite, and with grateful caresses reluctantly bestowed liberty as the reward of its service. It slowly skipped amid the bushes, as if unwilling to be so rewarded. The Knight in an attitude of delight had observed this action, and before the little creature retreated, he took it in his arms, and seemed to thank it for the part it had borne in the deliverance of so lovely a damsel.

They rode swiftly for some time, winding in oblique paths along the mountains. The roar of waves informed them they
were

were approaching the ocean; and the hoofs of the steeds soon began to sink in the sandy beach. At the distance of a few paces appeared a rudely built cabin, beneath the shelter of a little cluster of pine and juniper trees. The Knight here dismounted, and assisting Leofrida to do the same, pointed to the cottage, as if that was the period of her journey.

By what name must I beseech Heaven to reward my deliverer? said she in a gentle tone. He seemed to hesitate for some time.—If the Lady Leofrida shall deign to remember one who deems it glory to have served her, replied he, recollect me by the name of the Knight of the White Hare. So saying, he mounted his steed, and continued without moving, till Leofrida arrived at the cabin; then, hastily retreating, followed by his Squire, he entered a neighbouring thicket, and was seen no more.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

———— The pilgrim's staff he bore ;
And fix'd the scallop on his hat before.

PARNEL.

LEOFRIDA gazed after her deliverer ;
and silently addressing to Heaven and
to him a prayer of gratitude, she tapped
gently at the door of the cabin. It was
opened by a cleanly peasant. She entered,
and found herself in the arms of the Lady
Editha. The transports of the meeting
at length gave way to enquiry ; and Leo-
frida was going to learn the cause of her
strange retention in the vault, when the
appearance of the aged Mortimer awoke
her to new wonder and delight. The good
old man expressed his joy at seeing her,
with more tears than words. Venerable
and faithful friend, cried she, it is thou
that

that hast rescued us!—He has, indeed, been the principal instrument of our delivery, said the Lady Editha. She then related, That Mortimer, suspicious that some evil hung over the ladies, after their departure from the castle, secretly departed; and, disguised in the habit of a peasant, traced them to the castle of the Baron de Lacy. He lurked in the environs of the castle, hiring himself as assistant to a wood-cutter. One day as he was returning from his labour, with a burden of wood on his shoulders, overcome with fatigue, he fell beneath his load. A knight passed by, in his way to the castle, who, with the most condescending courtesy, offered his assistance. Something interesting in the countenance of the old man, drew from the illustrious stranger many questions. His answers throwing still more mystery over his story, the interrogatories were pursued till, allured by the united dignity and sweetness of the stranger's manner, Mortimer disclosed the
captive

captivity of the two ladies in the neighbouring castle. The knight started, and shuddered as he mentioned the Baron de Lacy. No ! cried he at length, starting from his musing, they shall be rescued.—Duty and Honour, why are you at variance?—He said no more ; but appointed Mortimer to meet him the next evening on the same spot ; reserving to himself the discovering in what part of the castle the captives were confined.

Mortimer, exulting in the fortunate circumstance that had presented to him so valuable and powerful an assistant, was faithful to the hour. The knight, who concealed his name and rank, arrived soon after, bearing in his hands a white hare, round whose neck was suspended a folded paper.

He bade Mortimer follow him to a spot at some short distance from the castle walls, where, removing some briars, he

let down the little messenger. The next night the stranger and Mortimer dropped the scaling ladder in the vault; when, as Lady Editha had reached the aperture and placed her foot on the ground, several vassals of the Baron rushed forth from the adjacent grove, and, in the name of their lord, commanded the knight to desist. In a tone of authority, he bade them keep off; but on the Baron's name being repeated a second time, he seemed to start; and they holding him back by force, drew up the ladder. Mortimer, in the mean time, with the rapidity of an active youth, conveyed the Lady Editha away; and was lost from the pursuit of the Baron's people by the windings of the thick groves that overspread the foot of the mountains.

The adventure of the succeeding night discovered the unwearied zeal of the unknown knight, in the generous task of rescuing the illustrious captives.

The

The rescued ladies poured forth their ardent benedictions on the generous stranger; and rejoicing in the faithful care of the good Mortimer, debated on what path they should now pursue to secure themselves from the further vengeance of the Baron de Lacy.

The cabin of the peasant, who was the wood-cutter to whom Mortimer engaged himself as an assistant, could not possibly afford them shelter longer than that night.

Where should we fly, said the Lady Editha, but to our rightful protector, the Earl of Lenox?

A glance of disapprobation and distrust shot across the features of Mortimer. Safety is not to be sought in Britain, replied he with a heavy sigh. What! shall we fly (cried Leofrida, fugitives unknown, and debased) from our coun-

try, from our lawful protectors, and our home?—Your home! gentle Lady, returned he with a deeper sob—there reigns tumult, and perchance treason. Then let us fly to Sigefert, resumed Leofrida, to Bretagne.—The idea struck the Lady Editha. She hesitated. But to rove, cried she; to ramble unattended——

At the last word, a glance of respectful attachment from the venerable Mortimer reproved her regret. Deign, most unfortunate Lady, said he, to accept at least one, though a poor and feeble servant. Not even the toil and dangers of foreign sojourners shall now separate me from serving, from guarding you, far as the little strength Nature shall allow.

The Lady Editha wept at this disinterested affection; and Leofrida rejoiced in the protection of this reverend adherent of the family, while she sighed that his age should lose the comforts of a home,
and

and the solace that declining years demand. With the invention that ever prompts the ideas of busy youth, Leofrida now resolved various schemes for their safety. Beneath the habit of pilgrims, said she, shall we not be at once free from suspicion and insult? The thought pleased the Lady Editha. And I, said Mortimer, will serve you in the same disguise.—No time was to be lost; and this plan was instantly resolved on. The peasant, whose fidelity could be relied on, was dispatched to procure habits.

The Lady Editha reminded Leofrida that her mother was the daughter of a noble family in Bretagne, and that the Earl of Pontoise was her brother; though from some private differences, no intercourse had been kept up. Yet he will not surely refuse to protect the daughter of his sister, when circumstances so unfortunate chase her from her native country.

Thither we will fly; and disguised as female pilgrims, we shall escape the pursuit of the Baron de Lacy, whose tenaciousness of his rights will not fail to instigate his vengeance on discovering the flight of his captives. Thus resolved, they committed themselves to Providence, and prepared to brave all the dangers of their unavoidable exile.

The beautiful form of the young and graceful Leofrída was now arrayed in a coarse grey garment; her soft hair was bound up in a silken net, and concealed by the pilgrim's hat, which was decorated only by the scallop-shell. Her graceful hand bore the staff of pilgrimage; and a small cross of ivory was suspended round her neck. The Lady Editha wore the same dress; and the venerable figure of Mortimer adorned with the strictest propriety the habiliments of one resigned to purposes of piety.

The

The gallant unknown had not left his generous deed imperfect. He had prepared a small vessel, which, under pretext of taking a long fishing voyage, was to set sail for Bretagne.

Having rewarded the peasant with twenty marks for his service, they proceeded the succeeding day to the shore.

The lightly armed shallop was moored near the cabin; the resigned, yet pensive exiles, dropt on their much-loved shore a silent tear; and embarking, fought to hope for that refuge in a distant land which their own country so cruelly denied.

The vessel, which was manned with only a few sailors, and commanded by a person of a respectable appearance, set sail. The Lady Editha, who now found that her life was become a succession of severe trials, supported herself with all the fortitude her feeble efforts could supply.

She leaned on the arm of Leofrida, who as the light keel cleft the curling surface of the green waves, sighed and gazed on the retreating land. She watched it as it sunk still lower and lower, as if anxious to snatch the precious object from the devouring sea. The scattered cabins on the shore were now lost to the eye; the tufted groves were longer discernible on the mountains; even they, at length, blended into the misty mass, and a streak of dimmer blue only divided the sky from the ocean. This too disappeared; and their beloved, their native land, was now completely buried from the sight of the exiles.

The pure breeze that skimmed over the tranquil expanse of sea, exhilarating to those whose lungs had long ~~enjoyed~~^{haled} the damp air of a subterranean cell; the memory of Sigefert and his friend; the idea that they were now approaching the land that held them, revived and consoled
the

the Lady Editha ; while Leofrida exulted even to transport.

In two days the hazy coast of Bretagne was seen to skirt the borders of the main. The pilot was directed not to land at Brest, but to put into some unfrequented port, to avoid discovery ; it being the intention of the ladies to pursue their journey to the domains of the Earl of Pontoise, under the pretence of being pilgrims, who had made a vow of pilgrimage to the shrine of Saint Antoine.

The vessel was now driven into a small creek, where a hamlet of fishermens huts, and the humble store-houses of inferior merchants, were dignified with the name of a port. It was early in the day when the exiles landed. After offering to the commander of the ship a valuable gratuity, which he respectfully declined accepting, the wanderers reposed a few hours in the cleanly hut of a fisherman.

Here Mortimer stored his scrip with plain but wholesome food ; and prepared mules for their journey.

They set forward, intending to reach a village, at the distance of a league, before night.

Fearing to procure a guide, lest their course might the more easily be traced, they asked directions concerning the route through the villages ; which were given with such clearness, that they imagined it would be impossible to mistake their way.

They advanced for a considerable time, till the path became intricate, from being intersected by cross ways. Of this spot they had been warned, and directed to pursue that track which ascended a little ridge of loamy rock. The acclivity was gentle at first, but rising high as it advanced, and becoming narrow, the travellers

vellers were unwilling to trust to the feet of their mules; and turning, tried to keep the same direction on the lower ground: their fears betrayed them; and this little deviation, after they had proceeded near a quarter of a league, was found to have bewildered them far from their right way. Their fruitless attempts to regain the path wasted so much time, that with alarm they beheld the gentle fading of the eastern sky foretel the stealing advance of twilight. Fearful of being left in a strange land, far from human habitation, they hastened on, tho' unacquainted with the road; pursuing a track that appeared most used. The direction they thus took winded, after many crooked stretches, up a rough knoll; near whose summit it entered a thick grove of pine trees. They pierced through the entangled boughs, and with difficulty discerned the path, now perplexed with underwood.

The twilight deepened ; and when they issued from the thicket, the obscuring haze of evening had blended into one hue the various tints of Nature.

A spacious plain now extended before them. A confused murmur from afar seemed to moan hollow in the air ; and pale dancing lights, as of moving tapers, were seen in several parts of the plain.

The wanderers started ; yet curiosity led them some paces farther. They distinguished, by the light that flashed on the white canvas, tents that seemed like the relics of an encampment ; and perceived dim moving figures pass to and fro, bearing to the yet remaining pavilions the bodies of their slaughtered friends. The wavering gleams of the tapers, striking on their casques, shewed them to be warriors..

—As I pass'd

Up yon thick-planted ridge, I spy'd their helms

'Mid

Mid brakes and boughs, trench'd in the heath
below ;

Where, like a nest of night-worms, did they glitter,
Sprinkling the plain with brightness.

MASON.

Terror and wonder seized the perplexed pilgrims. They now discerned parties in the distant ground, beyond the tents, pursuing others, while here and there a solitary banner waved dimly in the gloom.

Leofrida, inspired by youthful curiosity, advanced a few paces before her companions, towards the more open summit of the hill. As she stopped her mule to gaze round, a party of the fugitives, wheeling rapidly round, approached the ascent ; seeking shelter by ascending, among the thick bushes that clothed its side, they were chased by a single warrior on foot. The affrighted damsel retreated ; and joining her trembling companions, they tried to make their way out of the thicket ; but fearing to encounter the
defeated

defeated foldiers, after hastening back a few paces, they alighted from their mules, and, beneath the thick shadow of the pines, waited till all should be silent. The feeble Lady Editha, wearied with the fatigues of her journey, yet patiently suffering these new disasters, sat down on the ground, leaning her head on the shoulder of Leofrida ; while the faithful Mortimer stood sentinel by the side of the mules. They heard a loud noise, like the rallying shout of fugitive : turning on their pursuers ; it lasted but a few moments ; and the rustling of persons brushing through the brambles succeeded.

An unbroken silence now reigned ; and, after an interval of near a quarter of an hour, the agile Leofrida sprung forward to observe if they might venture to proceed. She stepped softly to the open part of the hill, to which she had before advanced : she found with surprise that the ground, before dry, was now moist. Her feet

feet slid on the slippery soil, and she shuddered while the yet remains of twilight discovered that she trod in blood. A feeble groan at this instant was breathed from among the bushes on the left hand. She looked and discerned the armed hand of a warrior stretched on the ground; the other parts of the figure being concealed.

A shriek from Leofrida called the Lady Editha and Mortimer to the spot. They started as they surveyed the bloody ground and the extended arm, and stood in silent suspense, till a second groan, so low as scarcely to be heard, roused them from their musing.

Terror now in some measure gave way to compassion; and Mortimer approaching the spot whence the groans proceeded, gently seized the arm, and perceived the figure of a warrior nearly dead. With much difficulty he tenderly lifted him to the
the

the more open space, and raising his head, supported him in his arms. Now, more than ever, they bewailed the want of light, to assist the unfortunate knight, whom they could perceive still to bleed. Leofrida softly tried to raise the helmet of the warrior. As she placed her hand gently on the cords that laced it to the head, a low hollow voice from the vizor painfully gasped, O! Sigefert, I have not deserted thee!—Her hand dropped—Osberne! exclaimed they all in one voice.

The Lady Editha sunk on the ground. and Leofrida, quivering with agitation and surprise, assisting Mortimer to lift up the helmet, she distinguished plainly, through the gloom, features so well known—features of the friend of her brother.

The solitariness of the place, the still hour, and the obscurity of the advancing night, concurred to perplex the unfortunate

nate wanderers; while keen agony for the situation of the brave youth, and distracting apprehensions for Sigefert, confused all their movements. How to guard the little life that yet animated the friend, thus strangely met, they knew not. Mortimer proposed that they should endeavour to convey him to the tents they had descried at a distance; and cautioned the ladies not to discover themselves.

The good old man had just raised Ofberne from the ground, and tottering beneath his burden, was conveying him to his mule, when three or four soldiers, carrying a torch, hastily ascended the hill. They approached the spot where the wanderers stood, and hastening towards Mortimer, in a courteous tone, desired him to yield to them the wounded knight. 'Who are you?' said the fearless Mortimer—tell; for if ye be foes to this wretched knight, ye shall slay me, aged as I am, before

before he shall be delivered into your hands.

We are his friends; his faithful soldiers, replied they. We have fought this bloody day under the banners of the Earl of Albemarle.

The name of the Earl of Albemarle struck still deeper anxiety into the breast of Leofrida, who stood near Osberne. O Sigefert, my brother! exclaimed she in an agony; and gasping with trembling lips, asked a thousand confused questions of the soldiers, which were not answered.

Mortimer now resigned his burden to the soldiers; and, as they bore the knight hastily away, he possessed sufficient recollection to ask them, where he could find a safe shelter for two female pilgrims.— They will be secure in the Earl's tent, returned they. Follow us; we will guide
you

you thither. The trembling ladies mounted their mules in haste: eager to follow Osberne, and learn tidings of Sigefert, fatigue and terror were lost in tender anxieties. The soldiers finding they could not bear the fainting warrior in their arms without rankling his wounds, stopped on the summit of the hill, and, with alertness, not wonderful in those whose martial life exposes them to urgencies, tore off some branches from the pines, and wove them into a kind of litter. On this they placed the youth, who had now relapsed into a state of insensibility, and slowly proceeded down the ascent, followed by Mortimer and the distressed ladies.

They took a cross direction, wheeling to the right side of the plain, to avoid the stragglers of the enemy's routed forces; and in a short time arrived at the Earl's tent.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Hark!—heard ye not yon footsteps dread,
That shook the earth with thund'ring tread?

'Twas DEATH.—In haste

The warrior pass'd;

High tower'd his helmed head:

I mark'd his mail, I mark'd his shield,

I spy'd the sparkling of his spear,

I saw his giant arm the faulchion wield;

Wide wav'd the bickering blade, and fill'd the
angry air.

Song of the Chorus in Carastacus.

THE pavilion appropriated to the Earl
was still entire, though the flying
enemy had in their retreat destroyed many
of the other tents.

The Earl, with the sedate moderation
of a generous victor, was giving orders for
the care of the wounded, when Osberne
was borne into the tent. Heroic youth!
exclaimed

exclaimed he, thy first glories have been dearly bought. Mortimer, who followed the soldiers into the Earl's presence, now supplicated his protection for two female Pilgrims who had mistaken their way; judging it prudent to conceal their real names. A separate tent was courteously allotted for their reception, and the refreshment presented to them the best that the lately desolated camp afforded.

Apprehensions too keen for the fate of their beloved Sigefert, forbade them to regard the calls of hunger and fatigue. They again dispatched Mortimer to the Earl with enquiries.

I lost sight of that intrepid young warrior, replied the Chief, in the heat of the combat, and have not been able, notwithstanding the most diligent search, to hear more of him. This answer was a fatal stroke to the desponding females. Perhaps, exclaimed Leofrida, he now lies hid among
the

the slain. She started as she spoke, and with an impulse nearly involuntary, sprung to the door of the tent. She gazed on the dreadful scene that on all sides presented itself; and scarcely conscious what she did, her whole soul being prepossessed with the image of Sigefert dead, or dying among the mangled bodies, she stepped forward on the plain. The watchful Mortimer snatched up a torch and followed, while the distracted Lady Editha lay fluctuating between life and death. Leofrida, regardless of the care of the faithful Mortimer, bounded lightly over the ground, though her feet, defended only by the Pilgrim's sandals, frequently stumbled on splinters of lance beams. At a short distance she descried through the darkness rising heaps of slain, and hastily bent her way towards them, inspired by the horrid surmise that bewildered her senses. A few dismembered bodies intercepted her which had fallen in the outer ranks, where the fight was less furious. A severed arm now crossed her path;

path; now a headless trunk. She shuddered, but proceeded till Mortimer's torch flashed on a helmet that lay distant from any other of the relics that strewed the field. Darting her eye on the crest, and trembling lest she should descry some well-known device, she raised it from the ground; the vizor was lost, and as she looked on the casque, she perceived with unspeakable dread, that it contained a human head, though mangled and defaced. Her hand involuntarily dropped the horrid burden, and she turned with revolting horror from the sight, though yet unable to learn from the bruised and bloody helmet, the truth or falsehood of her agonizing suspicions. She stood now a while in speechless stupor, wildly watching the dim figures that here and there passed between the heaps of slain; some holding a lamp near the ground, as if willing to discover the features of a friend, or much-loved relation; some dragging from the bleeding masses the disfigured form they now
scarcely

scarcely recognised, to bestow on it the last sad rite of a stolen grave. Others were actually employed in scooping in the moistened soil this last receptacle of the human frame; using, instead of a mattock, the fragment of a broken buckler, the head of a lance, the beam of a shattered standard, or any other relic of the battle that lay near.

Roused by the voice of Mortimer, Leofrida started from her reverie, and pursued her way with frantic steps towards the heaps of bodies which she had first observed. Low groans transpired from these hillocks of slain, as if breathed by some wretch not yet expired, and imprisoned in a tomb of dead.—She started; she sighed as the symptom of unaided misery caught her ear; she advanced to the pile, and laid a trembling hand on it, with the wild wish of rescuing the buried sufferer from his sepulchre. Mortimer now drew nigh—they listened to hear whether the groan would

would be repeated. All was still. They gently displaced the first corpse, when a sob, painfully breathed, again was heard. Urged by the generous impulse of compassion, Mortimer now exerted all his strength, and removed several bodies, when gently lifting up one that lay beneath, he found, by the faint struggle of the arms, that it still lived. He softly extended it on the soil.—Leofrida, with a tremulous hand lifted up the torch, which she had erected in the moist earth, to survey the wretched warrior thus snatched from a couch formed of the mangled trunks of his fellow-soldiers.

He was a youth, and armed only as shield-bearer; his face was mangled; and Mortimer wiping off the blood with the border of his vest, discovered that it was Constantine, the youth whom Sigefert had selected for his Squire.

Leofrida felt a mournful transport that she had thus been the means of saving one dear to her brother—but where was that brother? While the languid youth was supported by Mortimer, she eagerly enquired after his master; but he was either insensible, or too weak to answer. Mortimer, calling to two soldiers who were at a small distance scooping a shallow grave, requested their assistance to bear the fainting youth to his tent. They cheerfully obeyed; and Leofrida hoping to hear some tidings of her brother from his Squire, slowly followed with her aged guard.

As they drew nigh the camp they perceived a light within the area before a small tent, round which a party of soldiers seemed busily employed. Their way lying near the spot, they discovered that the contented veterans, after their toilsome day, were preparing their frugal repast. The Earl, who was a true warrior, accustomed his troops to that cheerful accommodation

to

to circumstances, and contempt of hardships which characterise the bold soldier. Each carried his little store on his back, consisting of a bag of meal, which on a thin plate of iron he could soon bake into cakes in the open fields. With like expedition he prepared his meat, killing and cooking it as his need required. The small party near whom Leofrida passed, having slain a goat, had, as was their custom, flayed it, and placing the skin, hanging in form of a bag, on some stakes erected in the ground, they kindled a fire beneath, and made it serve as a cauldron for boiling the severed quarters of the flesh. They were watching with the keen regard of hunger their frugal provision, and recalling the events of the combat from which they were now reposing.

Leofrida was passing hastily by, when as the voices all eagerly tried to recount some brave action, they caught her involuntary ear.—A fiercer battle our brave leader

never fought, said one—and never was more boldly supported by his soldiers, said another. A glorious day was this to those who never before broke a lance. True, said a third, and our young heroes verified it: I fought near that stripling the Baron de Claire.—Leofrida now bounded nearer the groupe.

He fought, continued the same voice, like an old veteran, whose body was more hardened by scars than mail; not like an inexperienced boy, as he really is. For my part, had the javelin that pierced his hauberk and wounded his shoulder, run through my body, and left him unhurt to pursue his bold exploits, I should have thought my life had lasted long enough.—Leofrida would now have rushed through the circle, but Mortimer, judging they should gain more intelligence if the soldier related his tale uninterrupted, held her back.

Could

Could you not discover, asked the voice that spoke first, the cause of his strange disappearance from the field?—I kept close by him, replied the first speaker, who was an old foldier, for his ardour animated my own : though I must confess it sometimes seemed a little too like rashness, while the fearless youth, his companion (for where one raised his arm the other was sure to do the same) with equal bravery was more circumspect. As he rushed amid the thickest ranks of the enemy's foot, a small detachment of them wheeling rapidly round assailed him behind with short javelins; then, as if struck with a panic, the foremost in the party retreated hastily, and apparently fled. The impatient youth, roused by the outrage, and unaccustomed to the stratagems of war, pursued them—the remainder of the party followed, intending to close him in, but their design was frustrated by the young Osberne, whose single arm braved their numbers, and gave time to his friend to pursue the unwarlike

cowards unmolested. The second party was chased by this intrepid youth to the hill, from whence we have just conveyed him, I fear mortally wounded by the fugitives, who there rushed back on him. The young Baron has not since been heard of; and, perhaps, concluded the soldier with a heavy sigh, this manœuvre of the foe has proved a snare to him.

The fatal tale was now completely told, and Leofrida, more distracted than ever with her surmises, was assisted by Mortimer into the tent where they had left the Lady Editha. They related to her in few words what they had overheard. She shed a torrent of unavailing tears, and pointing to some lances erected in the ground, informed them that they were in Sigefert's tent. This circumstance redoubled their keen anxiety, which was heightened by the melancholy state of Osberne.

The

The wanderers, now more wretched than ever, consulted whether they should reveal themselves to the Earl. His attachment to the beloved Sigefert, and his friendly disposition towards his family, seemed to favour their discovery, as a means of providing themselves a sure protection. They therefore resolved to demand an audience on the morrow; and, revealing their rank, request him to convey them safe to the chateau of the Count de Pontoise.

Accordingly in the morning Mortimer was sent to the Marechal, to inform him the two strangers he had generously sheltered requested to return him their acknowledgments. A Page accompanied him back, to introduce them to the Earl's pavilion. As they entered, the first object that struck their eyes was the pale, fainting form of Osberne, extended on a couch, by which the Marechal with tender solicitude was sitting. The aged Mortimer,

unknown to the ladies, had passed the night by the side of the youth whom he loved with the affection of a parent, but forbore to disclose how near to him were persons he so much revered.

The youth raising his head at the approach of strangers, threw his languid eyes on the fair Pilgrim. He started, and with an effort which his feeble strength scarce allowed, hurried himself from the couch. "Sister of my Sigefert," cried he faintly; but the faltering tongue could articulate no more. The Marschal, astonished at the exclamation and agitation of Oiberne, gazed in wonder on the strangers, and countenously accosted them.

A mournful greeting passed between the friends. The youth, whose impatient curiosity was gratified in a few words, at the same time discovered to the Earl the dark and unfortunate situation of the illustrious Pilgrim. The generous Chief,
while

while he promised that protection, which an heroic mind is ever ready to afford to the female and the unfortunate, mingled his regret with their tears for the fate of the young Baron.

Next to your brave Sigefert, said the Marechal, this valuable youth will be ever high in my esteem. They have, indeed, began the career of glory as some would deem it honour to end it.

The pale countenance of Osberne was animated by a grateful emotion at this delicate praise.—And now, young warrior, continued the Earl, as I left the device of knighthood to be attained by your own deserts when I enrolled you beneath my banners, your first actions shall confer the emblem. This day you have distinguished yourself by a virtue not always the partner of courage.

Let the lion's mane that forms the crest of your helmet, wave over a silver dove; thus uniting, as your deeds verify, VALOUR and GENTLENESS. And to make the device more dear to the heart of a Knight, added the Earl, let some favour from the hand of a revered Lady ennoble it.—Then addressing Leofrida, Bestow this favour, lovely damsel, continued he, on the chosen friend of your brother. These two heroes have united in a fraternity, and are in more respects than as an order of chivalry, COMPANIONS IN ARMS.

Osberne, who received the generous praise of the Earl with unassuming modesty, felt a faint glow steal across his features at the last part of his speech; and turning a solicitous, yet respectful look on Leofrida, he stretched out his feeble arm, and reaching his helmet, which lay near, presented it to her. She took it, with a collected air that dignified the unbidden blush softening on her cheek, and untying the
the

the purple ribbon that suspended the little ivory cross to her neck, she bound it round the casque.—When you shall again meet Sigefert, said she, tears dropping on the helmet as she returned it, may you part no more!

The grateful youth kissed the precious bandage. Never! Never! exclaimed he. When this fillet shall be torn from my helmet, then shall my arm cease to be raised by the side of Sigefert.

The ladies now bidding a kind adieu to Osberne, retired; the Marechal promising the next day to send a party of his chosen soldiers to guide them to Chateau Pontoise, at the same time expressing his tender regret at the danger of their passing through a province harassed by hostilities.

Leofrida, when she returned to the tent appropriated for herself and her compa-

nion, found that the remembrance of her lost brother constantly brought with it the image of the generous Osberne. His graceful form, the sweetness of his manners, which were dignified by the exalted spirit that made itself visible in all his movements, were now the least part of his worth. His ardent, yet steady friendship; his valour, unconquerable yet mild; and the easy modesty which denied not applause with a false diffidence, but accepted it with a frank wish to deserve it, were qualities that spoke him worthy of the first rank in that illustrious order whose glory was to unite the most lofty virtues with the softest graces that can adorn the human heart.

Admiration of heroic merit, with increased esteem for the amiable youth, stoke together into the gentle soul of Leofrida; while veneration of her exalted graces had long usurped the breast of Osberne: Her present peculiar situation; a fugitive from her much-loved home; oppressed, injured
by

by those whose duty should have obliged them to protect her; the sufferings she had already encountered; and nobly supported, endeared her still more to his soul. Diffident, and conscious of his inferior rank, Osberne would frequently start when the sweet image of Leofrida pictured itself in his bosom. Rank and wealth belong not to me, said the virtuous youth to himself; but renown may be purchased by deeds of glory, and merit is the treasure of the poor.

CHAP. XI.

— Foltiffima di piante antiche orrende,
Che fpargon d' ogn' intorno ombra funefta.

Nè qui gregge od armenti, a' pafchi, all' ombra
Guida bifolco mai, guida pastore:
Ne v' entra peregrin, fe non fmarrito,
Ma lunghe paffa, e la dimoftra a dito.

LA GERUSALEMME.

Trees old and horrid thick befet the ground,
And fhed a dark portentous fhade around.

Here never shepherd guides his flock to feed,
No herdsmen here their hungry oxen lead:
No Pilgrim enters, but, with ftartled eyes
And pointing finger, wheels and paffes by.

CONSTANTINE was fufficiently re-
covered from the effects of his wound:
to answer the interrogatories of the impa-
tient ladies, but could give no fatisfactory
reply to their eager enquiries concerning
his mafter.

To

To leave the camp without knowing where or in what situation was their beloved Sigefert, seemed to the delicate affection of his aunt and sister, a species of treachery; but to remain in a scene of war and tumult was strictly improper. They passed the night in sleepless anxiety, loth to depart, yet fearful to stay.

Morning now gleamed on the field, which was scarcely freed from its load of slain, when a party of chosen warriors presented themselves before the tent to guide them to the chateau of the Count de Pontoise, which was on the farthest borders of Bretagne. The Marechal himself appeared to bid them adieu; but when they requested to see Osberne, they were informed that he had relapsed into a torpid state, and that a wound in his shoulder, occasioned by the point of a spear, now wore an alarming appearance, and prevented him from lifting up his head.

Leofrida,

The idea of Leofrida and her feeble companion having been trusted to the guidance of a party which he could not command, and traversing a province distressed by hostile tumults, as he quitted the camp, and cast his eye over the country desolated by war, pained his bosom with a keen regret. The faint streaks of smoke arising from hamlets which the unauthorised rapine of the soldiers had pillaged and fired, alarmed and agonized his soul.—That way they passed, he cried.

Then stopping his steed, he was turning his course to pursue them, but the calm recollection that ever embraced the soul of Osberne, here checked him with the remembrance that the guards to whom they had been committed, were faithful and tried: they would stand as a bulwark before the trust delivered to their charge. The image of Sigefert now solely engaged his thoughts, and he proceeded with steady ardour in his expedition.

He

He advanced first to the little knoll to which he had pursued the fugitives by whom Sigefert was allured beyond the precincts of the field of battle. The spot in which himself sustained the severe conflict, when they turned short upon him, was still discernible; and he shuddered when he beheld a young wolf greedily champing grass that was withered in the baked blood that perhaps had flowed from his own veins.

He passed on, eagerly enquiring of every peasant or passenger he met, intelligence which none could give. Many leagues were traversed ere evening began to appear, and the day had brought no occurrence to the knight and his companion. They drew near the borders of the province; and a few huts that skirted the boundaries warned the reluctant Osberne that a short repose was necessary.

He advanced towards the solitary habitations.

of a difficult vow, leaves me but little hope of being welcomed by those I loved. Yet, added he, I behold those green steps, which I framed with my own hand, still trimmed with care. 'Twas I who taught that vine, now too old to produce its wonted clusters, to twist itself through that lattice. 'Twas I that marked the limits of that little garden.

The good Pilgrim was proceeding in noting every long-lost object, while a tear frequently trickled over the cockle-shells that studded his clöke. Osberne, with emotions of generous sympathy, listened in respectful silence, when steps were heard within the cottage.—I will conceal myself a while, said the sage.—He had scarcely spoken when the door was opened by a young man, in homely but neat attire. The Pilgrim, with a courteous obeisance to the Knight, stepped a few paces back, Osberne requested an hour's repose in the cottage for himself and his companion with that

tations which stood unsheltered on the summit of a gentle hill, up whose ascent neat steps formed in the green sward, and covered carefully with shaven turf, led to the clean, yet rudely-built cottages.

Osborne had gained the top of the acclivity, leaving Constantine with the flocks, while he requested some refreshments, when a venerable figure (whose head stooping over his long beard, declared the last stage of human existence) caught his regard. He was knocking at the door of one of the huts—a branch of palm-tree which he bore in his hand, denoted him returning from pilgrimage, and having performed his vow.

Does this clean abode belong to you, good Father? said Osborne in a courteous tone.—If yet there remain any of a family I once possessed, replied the reverend sage, they dwell here; but an absence of fifteen years, which I have passed in performance
of

of a difficult vow, leaves me but little hope of being welcomed by those I loved. Yet, added he, I behold those green steps, which I framed with my own hand, still trimmed with care. 'Twas I who taught that vine, now too old to produce its wonted clusters, to twist itself through that lattice. 'Twas I that marked the limits of that little garden.

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that

cruel vow. The Pilgrim now sobbed aloud, and could scarcely take the cup from the hand of the child.

Thy grandfire? said he to Justine—and is thy father alive?—Ah! no, returned the vine-dresser; he died not long since; and on his death-bed he gently breathed the name of Colombiere. The Pilgrim could no longer refrain.—My son! exclaimed he, and clasping his hands, rose from his seat, and remained a while silent. Justine and Cecile stood in speechless astonishment.—Yes! Justine, resumed the Pilgrim, thou seest thy grandfather—returned to a home which he had not till now deserved; but my sufferings have expiated.—Justine in a transport fell on his knees, while the little Pepin, who had been playing with the Pakmer's staff, ran to kiss the feet of the Pilgrim. Osborne's tender soul sympathized in the felicity of the minute, yet fearing to prevent, by the presence of strangers, communications interesting to
the

The joyful family, he beckoned to Constantine, and hastened out of the cottage. A small porch was framed of a rude trellis round the door; here Constantine, who was young and fatigued, sitting down, fell into a welcome slumber, while Osborne paced the summit of the hill in deep meditation. He cast his eyes round on the dim expanse of landscape, and sighed as he revolved which way to direct his journey. The neighbouring cottagers were all sunk in repose, and a solemn silence, disturbed only by the flutter of the night-raven, reigned on all sides. A darker stretch of shade skirted the valley towards the east; and from the irregularity of its outline, it seemed to be formed by a vast assemblage of trees. The hint of Cecile, concerning some neighbouring forest, occurred to his memory. He stopped and gazed earnestly on the spot. The lowering glooms of the night aided surmise, and gave Fancy cause for suspicion. I have no certainty to guide my route, said the

Knight ; I will pass through that forest. Osberne was as fearless as he was deliberate ; and no motive seeming to deter the intention, he resolved to fulfil it. Thus determined he marked the forest more minutely. It appeared to be of almost immeasurable extent by the tufted tops undulating in bold shadow nearest the eye, then sunk into far distance and blended with the dim skies.

Intently noting the grand extent of dusky shade, he discerned where the trees were least thick, a red light that faded to paler gleams among the intervening masses of indistinct foliage. He was surprised, but not startled ; and this appearance, had he not been before determined, would have proved a strong inducement to explore the forest.

As he still gazed on the light, a thousand fancies stole across his mind, when it
waved

waved in a bright flash, and instantly disappeared.

Osborne stood still in the same attitude, when the cottage door opened, and Justine came to seek his guest; who, returning to the blazing hearth, found the old Pilgrim thus restored to the arms of his children, weeping his thanks to Heaven.

The impatient Osborne rose from his rough couch with the first glimmering of the morning twilight. The Pilgrim soon joined the small family, and after a few minutes of pious devotion, they shared the frugal refreshment. The Knight bade a kind adieu to his hospitable hosts, and received the benediction of the venerable father. There was something in the circumstance of this reverend Pilgrim's arrival at the cottage—his extraordinary vow—his hint of an expiation, which, had not the mind of Osborne been solely occupied by concerns so near to his heart as the

safety of Sigefert, would have excited curiosity. He nevertheless begged permission to ask the good Pilgrim's blessing, when he should return to join the troops of the Marechal; and his request was repaid by a modest invitation to refresh himself at the cottage whenever they passed that way.

Constantine now prepared the steeds; and Justine being ready to set forward for his morning labour, they again bade farewell to Cecile and her aged guest.

Osborne and Justine were descending the turf steps, while Constantine waited below with the horses, when the Knight, gazing towards the east, beheld the frowning crimson of the dawn (for the morning was dull and hazy) gleaming behind the summit of the forest. A misty obscurity sat on the dark heights of the trees; and he observed Justine avoided looking that way. —Have the goodness to guide me to that forest,

forest, said Osberne. The Peasant started, and requested him to turn another way; but the Knight was determined; he mounted his steed, and directed his course towards the forest. Justine sighed, and pointed to a track that winded obliquely through the valley—he followed the Knight for some time, then turned into a cross path, and entered a plantation of vines.

It was some time before Osberne arrived within the precincts of the forest. He alighted from his horse; and bidding Constantine do the same, they fastened the bridles to the stem of a sapling, and entered the intricate domain.

C H A P. XI.

——— Whate'er you are,
 That in this desert inaccessible,
 Under the shade of melancholy boughs,
 Lose and neglect the creeping hours of time;
 If ever you have look'd on better days;
 If ever been where bells have toll'd to church;
 If ever sat at any good man's feast;
 If ever from your eye-lids wip'd a tear,
 And known what 'tis to pity, and be pity'd——

SHAKESPEARE.

THEY had not proceeded far among
 those confused and entangled brakes,
 when the loud hollow blast of a horn
 echoed through the forest. It was suc-
 ceeded by a violent crashing of the under-
 wood; and a furious wild boar, in whose
 side stood the head part of a broken spear,
 rushed forth. The enraged animal darted
 on Constantine, who was nearest to him;
 which Osberne instantly perceiving, grasp-
 ed

ed his sword, and sprung on the savage foe.

As if adhering to those laws which regulate human combats, the boar still attacked his first antagonist, who was bold, but too young to maintain so severe a conflict. The knight, in the danger of Sigefert's favourite, now forgot his own peril; and, regardless of his life, tried to turn the vengeance of the creature on himself. He placed himself behind the stem of a tree, and extending his arm, grasped the beam of the spear that was still erect in the side of the beast. With one mighty effort he drew it forth; and the anguish of the wound, thus torn open and rankled by the spear-head, irritated the animal to madness.

Gnashing his dreadful tusks, he turned on the knight, who kept him at bay with the point of his sword. Still more frantic at this contempt of his rage, he tore up

the brambles and grass, which were dyed in his own thick blood. Osberne had now the advantage, and profiting by the unavailing anger of his foe, thrust his sword, with collected strength, beneath the under tusk.

Constantine, whom Osberne by a signal had forbidden to interfere in the fray, now advanced; and in the warmth of frolicsome youth, with a triumphant flourish, brandished his sword, and severed the head of his fallen foe; making himself merry with its vast half-closed eyes, and the grinning chasm of its jaws.

The first danger they had encountered, being thus subdued, they pierced deeper into the forest. The shrill tone of the horn again resounded; it drew nearer to the spot where they now stood; it was a small thicket of firs; the ground before them, for several paces, was rough and shaggy, but destitute of full grown trees.

Aloud

A loud brushing through the distant foliage was now heard, and a troop of horsemen on a rapid gallop, shot across the open space. They were armed in coats of mail, having boar-spears in their hands, and a short curtelax by their side. The device on their shields was a vast hunting-horn suspended on a branch of ash. They wore for crests boughs of mulberry trees, and their furcoats were the skins of wild boars, red deer, and other savage inhabitants of the forest.

Osberne and Constantine being concealed in the thicket, were not perceived by the foresters; who passed swiftly out of sight.

Determined to explore the deepest recesses of this shady desert, the knight proceeded to pierce farther and farther into the intricate windings, notching with his sword the boughs of the trees, that the

perplexity of the paths might not prevent his return.

Many hours elapsed, and nothing occurring, Osberne grew impatient of farther delay, and was turning to seek his steed, when casting his eyes through a rude antique vista of heavy beeches, he perceived something at the extremity that wore the appearance of human dwellings. He advanced, and proceeding down the avenue, observed, suspended on the bare sapless trunks, bucklers, casques, lances, cross-bows, the skeleton heads of wild boars, and other trophies of the spoils of the hunter. The avenue ended in an open space of vast extent. A number of cabins, formed of rough stakes, were arranged in irregular rows. They were roofed with boughs of holly, curiously interwoven, which gave them an appearance at once grotesque and sylvan.

The

The ancient trees that inclosed the space, some of them being only withered trunks, bare of branches, and only foliated by climbing plants; others stretching out a solitary bough, were decorated like the avenue, with arms, and other signals, appropriated to the hunter and the warrior.

As the knight and his companion were gazing with earnestness on these rural abodes, Constantine keenly observed, that they might here probably find some provision. Osborne with quickness rejected the idea of taking by stealth what he would only accept as a boon of hospitality; but the opinions of the youth were less strict; and while the knight was remarking the small guidons that were erected between the cabins, and which bore the same device as that on the shields of the foresters, he stepped into one of the dwellings which was the most spacious, but soon retreated with a look of alarm,

saying he heard sounds within, though he could distinguish no one. Osberne now entered the cabin: it was furnished only with quivers, spears, and many parts of armour. A quarter of a boar ready dressed, which lay on the ground, among some wild sorrel and other vegetables, engaged the notice of Constantine; while Osberne was carefully examining the cabin, and advancing to the farther end. He here perceived an opening in the ground, down which a few stairs seemed to lead into a cave. Concluding this recess might be the receptacle for the stores of the foresters, he tried not to descend, but stood a few minutes listening at the top. He could plainly hear steps pacing below; and imagining it might be some of the party who had not joined in the hunting expedition, he retired from the cabin; Constantine soon following with a pilfered portion of the dressed meat.

A secret wish to enquire of the foresters

ers tidings of the friend he so eagerly sought, prompted Osberne to linger in the forest till they should return at night to their habitations; when he likewise intended courteously to request a small share of their provision. He consequently wandered not far from the vicinity of the cabins.

The twilight that always reigned in those thick groves, now began to deepen into a darker hue, and announced the approach of evening.

The hollow horn again sounded through the vast extent of shade; and the foresters appeared advancing up the avenue that led to their habitations. Some were laden with slain deer; some with the skins of wolves, which they had flayed to supply them with furcoats; and some bore the javelins, which they had not found needful to use.

They

They alighted before the door of the greater cabin; and kindling a fire with weeds, dried for that purpose, they placed before it the carcase of a stag.

Osborne was now going to advance and greet them, when he was deterred by a wish to see those persons, whom he had supposed to remain in the cabin, come forth. He watched a long time, but in vain. The foresters now fetching some flasks of wine from the cabin, began their supper. One of them, with his sword, flashing off a slice from the shoulder of the stag, and placing it on a plate of oziers woven transversely, gave it to another, saying, Take this to the youth who calls himself a knight; for famine is not the method by which we must dispatch him. Osborne was now chained, by curiosity, to the place of his concealment.

The other forester taking the portion of meat, entered the cabin which Osborne

berne had before examined. He was, now convinced, that the cave he had observed was the prison of some wretch, who had fallen into the hands of this party.—This business displeases me, said another of the troop, as he swallowed, with a stern yet sedate air, a large morsel of the roasted stag. We disclaim the title of out-laws; and to such alone affairs of this kind belong. We are knights; our profession is arms; and the Duke, by engaging us to aid him against the force of this English chief, pays us proper regard.—

It is that, said he who spoke first, that obliges us to fulfil the command given us by the knight in the black vizor, who penetrated into our forest a few days ago; for the youth whom we took captive, as he chased the fugitive Bretons, is our enemy, if we join the Duke's party. Besides, it is our interest to serve the Sovereign, under whose reign we peaceably enjoy

enjoy our liberty and our independence in this forest ; and we cannot better please him than by stopping the career of the young Baron de Claire, one who threatens to become a foe much to be dreaded.

Then it were surely better, rejoined another, to send him prisoner to the Duke. No, returned the first forester, the Duke is parsimonious, and the reward offered by the strange knight is ample, and will be instantly in our hands.

Dreadful certainty now flashed on the mind of Osberne. He had discovered his friend—his lost Sigefert ; but discovered him in the hands of a troop of wild, unknighly foresters. Joy that he was living, for a few minutes, filled him with thankfulness ; but how to rescue him, distracted him.

He clasped his hands in an agony of regret, that he had been within a few
paces

paces of his friend; had heard his step, and yet retreated, when he might possibly, in the absence of the troop have delivered him.

Presence of mind was the peculiar grace of Osberne: he knew that to rush amid so numerous a band, with fierce defiance, would not only be inconsiderate, but unavailing rashness. He determined, therefore, to address them as knights who would scorn to transgress that honour which inviolably binds the votaries of chivalry. He, therefore, unsheathed his heavy faulchion, and with a firm undaunted mien, walked towards the circle.

The party frowned at the intrusion, but rose with a kind of stern courtesy.

Valiant Foresters, began Osberne, you have, captive in your cabins, a youth to whom I have allied myself, by a sacred vow, in the order of knighthood. We
are

are sworn companions in arms. I come to claim from you, as from knights who revere the obligations of martial honour, the restoration of your prisoner. A chance of war led him into your hands; but the true warrior subdues his foe by giving him again to liberty and glory.

With steady intrepidity, yet without the haughtiness of a threat, he pronounced these words. The foresters gazed on each other, and continued silent. He who had expressed himself displeased at the treachery intended against Sigefert, spoke first.

You do well, Sir Knight, said he, in supposing us ruled by the dictates of honour. But this affair requires deliberation: we are the allies of the Duke, and this youth is our foe.

And we are traitors to our cause, replied another, if we release him.—A long debate

debate now ensued ; and as some of the foresters seemed bent on retaining their captive, the features of Osberne assumed an expression bordering on fierceness.

The forester whose disposition appeared more gently inclined than that of the rest, now seemed for a considerable time lost in deep musing. Let the affair, said he breaking silence, be decided as becomes warriors. Let this knight, who demands the freedom of his companion, engage in combat with any of our party ; and if he first unhorses his antagonist, we will restore the captive ; if he is himself disarmed, the youth shall be sent prisoner of war to the Duke.

Loud shouts from some of the foresters applauded this idea, while the rest cowered in fullen silence. Osberne with joy declared himself ready to give the challenge ; yet trembled, as he saw hung upon the
the

the might of his own arm the safety of his beloved Sigefert.

The greater number being inclined to favour the proposal of the first forester, this method of decision was at length agreed upon.

The natural sedateness of Osberne for a few minutes, gave way to agitation; but rousing all his might, he prepared to rescue his friend, by the only means presented to him.

Bring forth the prisoner, exclaimed one of the foresters, and let him be witness of the fight.—This was too much for the generous Osberne; and though the fight of Sigefert would have animated his ardour, had any animation been wanting, yet he could not bear his friend should stand in fetters to behold himself liberated by one who, though his chosen friend,
was

was so much his inferior in rank and fortune. His intreaties, therefore, prevented this circumstance, which, for a reason far different than that which the delicate affection of Osberne surmised, would have pained the bosom of Sigefert, already galled by the cruel accident of his captivity, though he knew not the treacherous snare which had been spread for him.

The combat was appointed to be fought the next morning; and Osberne was invited to partake the supper of the foresters.

A vacant cabin was allotted for his repose. But to pass the night near to Sigefert, and not to see—to converse with him, was a reflection that robbed him at once of slumber and of the joy he would otherwise have experienced at having discovered the object of his so eager search.

The

The morning at length came. Constantine was dispatched for the steeds; and Osberne threw down his gauntlet to the first forester, whose lenity of disposition had engaged his regard. The challenge was accepted, and the space before the cabins appointed and measured for the lifts.

The forester accoutred himself in a hauberk reserved for purposes of war; still keeping on his casque with the leafy crest. He chose a lance from among those which were suspended on the trees, of equal length with that borne by Osberne.

The rest of the foresters ranged themselves round at a proper distance, to behold the engagement; while Constantine, who sincerely revered the friend of his master, stood among the bushes in trembling expectation.

Osberne, had his own life depended on
the

the stroke of his spear, would have guided its blow with the calm firmness of a hero ; but the freedom, perhaps the life, of his friend depending on the important combat, struck an anxiety to his heart, which his sedate soul never before felt, that gave a tremor to his arm.

The spear of the forester, with unerring aim, struck on the casque of his foe, and rocked him in his saddle-seat, while that of Osberne, though driven with more might, by the artful jerk of his rival's head, spent its force in air.

Irritated by this unfortunate circumstance, the British knight hurled aside his erring spear, and fought to close with his sword. The forester did the same ; and the combat grew furious on both sides. Osberne recovering his recollection, practised those arts of war in which the martial discipline of his education had so well initiated him ; and found he had
much

much the advantage of his antagonist. The blows of the forester were aimed with the fury and rapidity of a hunter pursuing his prey.

This favourable circumstance elated the hope of Osberne; and with a determined valour, that seemed resolved on victory, he directed his skilful strokes.

The combat hung a long time in doubtful balance; when the forester, irritated that his might was baffled by the address of a stripling, grasped his heavy sword, and, as if he had darted to gore a wild boar, vaulted on the knight. The steed, as if he aided the intention of his rider, by the jutting out of his head assisted the stroke; and Osberne—the valiant, the dauntless Osberne, lay extended on the ground.

Confusion, keen regret, and a tumult of sensations, that approached to phrenzy, stung

hung the soul of the fallen knight. Though, in spite of his address and courage, fate had thus, without fault of his own, decided against him, he experienced an agony like the tortures of severe remorse. Had his own glory hung upon the issue of the contest, he would have risen from the field, on which he had fallen, with the dignity of one who could submit to the various chances of war; but to have lost by his failure the liberty of Sigefert, tinged his cheek with that flame of self-indignation which, on his own account, Osberne could never have felt.

The foresters sent forth a shout of victory, but it was uttered in a tone that seemed afraid to insult the vanquished.

Osberne soon rising from the ground, with a settled, yet melancholy air recovering his presence of mind, advanced towards the foresters, and spoke as follows:

The combat on which you agreed to suspend the fate of the young knight your prisoner, having been thus decided in favour of my antagonist, the laws of martial discipline oblige me to abide by it. But while you detain one captive, accept another, who is justly your own. I have unbidden penetrated into your solitude, and infringed upon that seclusion which is your glory and your privilege. I am therefore in your hands, self-surrendered.

Observing his victorious rival, with knightly generosity, frown at this speech, he continued with an air still more determined. I am your foe: you are the allies of the Duke of Bretagne; and whenever we meet in combat, this arm, whatever may be its might, must direct its blows on you. I am, besides the chosen friend of Sir Sigefert, a faithful, a steady adherent of the family De Claire. Even the possession of a foe, unrenowned as I, may add something to that exultation the Duke

Duke will feel at having in his power not only the heir of an illustrious family, but a knight who, in the last battle between the Bretons and their enemies, proved himself an antagonist to be dreaded.

Bind me then, added he hurling away his shield, and let me join that friend in his bonds, by whose side I could have wished to fight, long as his career of glory had lasted. Unite us in fetters, and let us together grace the triumph of the proud Duke.

Confused murmurs ran through the assembly; and the victorious forester, stepping forth, exclaimed, No! we are not a base banditti; we seize not those who unintentionally enter our precincts; nor had we taken our present prisoner, had we not met him in the act of pursuing our friends and allies. Go! fight against

us, youth; and think not I would insult thy valour, when I wish it better success than this day has afforded. When we meet in the public field of battle, thy arm may obtain the honour fortune to-day has bestowed on mine; and I in turn may press the ground, beneath the stroke of thy sword. Farewell, added he, extending his hand; and when thou remembereſt the foreſters, confeſs that they are generous foes,

Osborne was perplexed; the liberal bravery of his rival inſpired him with reſpect and admiration.

He took the hand preſented to him, and greeted the gallant foreſter. The reſt of the troop, who ſeemed to pay deference to him who had juſt ſpoken, in one voice declared, That they would not ſully the honour of their order, by ſeizing as priſoner one whom accident and
not

not hostile intention had led into their domains.

The idea of Leofrida—of the young, the lovely Leofrida—thrown upon the protection of a relation hitherto scarcely acknowledged as such, in a strange land, with no tried friend to rely on, now darted across the recollection of Osberne.

He retained the liberty which he might not resign, and casting a look of unutterable anguish on the cabin that held in fetters his beloved Sigefert, that friend whom he had failed to rescue, he obtained the word of the whole troop, that the life of Sigefert should not be endangered. Then bidding them such an adieu as their gallant behaviour demanded, followed by the disconsolate Constantine, with distressed reluctance he quitted the forest.

CHAP. XII.

—— Dear fallen friend !

Dost thou not now reproach me ? Dost thou not
With cold disdain behold my loit'ring sword,
And blast my tardy hand with all the curses
That wait on broken faith ?

LANGHORNE'S Fatal Prophecy.

WITH a sigh that seemed to rend in
funder the bosom which heaved it,
Osborne proceeded down the avenue. The
notches he had formed in the trunks of
the trees served to direct his way through
the intricacies of the forest. He looked
on them with dislike—they were guiding
him from his friend; and he could scarce
rebear wishing they might fail in their
intended purpose, and leave him bewild-
ered in that labyrinth which was the pri-
son of Sigefert. Constantine less agitated,
though

though distressed at the fate of his revered master, led the way, and Osberne reluctantly saw himself on the outer confines of the forest. He cast a glance on the cottage where he had been so hospitably received, yet delayed to visit it again, and took the route to Chateau Pontoise. A thousand times he chid his too fleet steed; a thousand times he was on the point of returning, and sharing, by force, the captivity of his friend. But amid the most agitating distress, sober reason never quitted the soul of Osberne, and he still advanced on his way.

The sufferings which Sigefert must undergo in a situation so galling to a gallant soul, especially a soul like his, bold and impatient even to rashness, dwelt on the fancy of Osberne with tormenting keenness. He painted to himself the image of the lofty-minded youth, roused even to distraction by his goading fetters, and tearing them from his limbs with the wild strength of his frenzy.

Left

Left in these meditations, he continued to follow the guidance of Constantine slowly, and in afflicted silence, till the image of Leofrida again recurring to his mind, he spurred his steed to a quicker pace—But to bear to her tidings of her brother; to tell her he was a prisoner, was to be resigned to the power of his princely foe, was too much for the lip of Osberne to pronounce. And were she to know that the means of rescuing him had been presented to his chosen companion, how must she detest the feeble friend whose arm had thus failed!

Towards the close of the day the melancholy Osberne beheld the turrets of Chateau Pontoise. He stopped—he lingered—and after much deliberation with his own mind, resolved to disclose to the Lady Editha and Leofrida, that Sigefert was in the hands of the enemy, but to conceal every circumstance of his own adventure at the forest.

He

He advanced slowly towards the chateau ; it was a magnificent pile of buildings, whose front angles were strengthened by two heavy square towers. The pennons, bearing the device of the Count de Pontoise, waved on the top of the embattled parapets in proud magnificence. The lofty front gates were supported on each side by a porter's lodge, adorned with the same kind of fret-work that ornamented the main edifice.

Osborne approached, and blew the horn which hung by the side of the gates. A porter appeared, who, on the Knight informing him that his business was with the Ladies de Claire, ushered him into a court gloomy and spacious. Osborne gazing round, perceived two females walking at the farthest end of the area in earnest discourse. One of them casting her eyes on the Knight, with an eager bound leaped towards him—it was Leofrida. Osborne, exclaimed she, breathless and trembling,
where

where is Sigefert? Osberne shuddered, and with a voice that struggled to pronounce the words, replied, He lives.—Gracious Providence be praised!—cried the joyful damsel; but why comes he not to greet his aunt, his sister, on their arrival in this far land? Osberne, why art thou alone?—Osberne could speak no more. The other female, who was young, and of an aspect that bespoke superior rank, with timid courtesy invited the Knight into the chateau. He entered in silence a large saloon, decorated only with standards, arms, and ensigns of war. The windows were of stained glass, “*casting a dim religious light*” across the black marble of the pavement.

Leofrida here, with a diffidence that told she could place no confidence in her uncle, presented Osberne to the Count de Pontoise. He was a nobleman of a stature uncommonly tall—his aspect was sternly
for—

forbidding, and his countenance bespoke determined obstinacy and inflexible pride.


He wore a furcoat of a deep violet colour, richly emblazoned with devices, and a helmet without the vizor. He greeted the Knight with unwilling courtesy, who returned the salutation with a dignity which is at once independent and unassuming.

Osborne now eagerly enquired for the Lady Editha. Leofrida's tears told him before she spoke, that some new calamity threatened her. Her friend, her loved and revered companion, was drooping on a bed of sickness. But I shall cheer, I shall recall her to health, by telling her Sigefert is living, is safe, and unhurt—
added she, casting a look of tender solicitude on Osborne. He turned away his face, lest the tears that stole down his manly cheek should betray the captivity of his friend; which the sickness of the Lady Editha made him now resolve, if possible,
to

to conceal. He is well—he is not wounded—faltered Osberne's tongue; and Leofrida bounded to tell her aunt the good tidings.

The young lady who had invited the Knight into the chateau, was following her companion, when the Count calling her back with a rigid air, said—Tell your brother, Sybilla, that here is a Knight who fought in the last battle between the Duke and the Barons; and that he may learn from him some account of the engagement.

Osberne, though displeased at the haughtiness with which the Count spoke, was curious to know whether he was inclined to take part in the hostilities which had now armed nearly all Bretagne; for he had hitherto preserved a sullen neutrality.



A young man, whose insignia bespoke him advanced to the first order of knighthood, soon appeared, and greeted Osberne with an aspect of conscious superiority. The stiff salute was returned with distant civility; and neither spoke till the Count broke silence.

Clovis has long been distinguished in arms, said he, but he has taken no part in the present war that disturbs our country; he will be glad, nevertheless, to hear some particular relation of the last battle.— Osberne, whose gentle complacency condescended to satisfy a curiosity expressed in such imperious terms, related the victory gained by the Mareschal's troops with interesting exactness, placing in the most conspicuous point of view, the valour and intrepidity of Sigefert. He remarked with surprise and indignation that the Count exulted not in the glory of his nephew; and the countenance of Clovis plainly

plainly indicated that he was jealous of a competitor in the career of fame.

Leofrida now returning, informed Osberne that the Lady Editha requested to see him. He followed her with a mind unjustly tortured by self-reproach for having failed to restore to her aunt a person whose sight would have revived her sickening frame.

The feeble, yet resigned victim to misfortune (for the fatigues and distresses of her cruel imprisonment at the castle of the Baron de Lacy, and her voyage to Brezgne, had spent the little remains of her strength) was supported on a low couch. When Osberne entered, a languid shade of delight crossed her pallid features. She stretched out her hand to welcome the friend of Sigefert.—Had he accompanied you, said she faintly, I could have died joyfully. Why, if he is safe, does he not fly

By to console, to guard his poor unprotected sister?

The heart of the generous youth could not support its own reproofs—he turned away; and Leofrida, who attributed his emotion to his concern at beholding the Lady Editha's hopeless situation; whose care and maternal affection he had shared with Sigefert, quickly replied, Osberne assures us he is well—he is not wounded—why then should we complain?—As she pronounced these words she stifled a sigh, which was not unperceived by Osberne. Struggling to regain his serenity, of which nothing but a delicate consciousness of self-blame could have deprived his soul, he turned to the Lady Editha, and in a voice of sweet consolation bade her hope for life, for happiness. A tear and a look of resignation was all her reply. Leofrida, who thought the tone, the manner of Osberne might have re-assured the most hopeless, caught

caught the fascinating comfort, and wept at its transient animation.

To have bestowed only a short-lived alleviation to the woes of Leofrida would have been to Osberne, at any other time, a transport of delight; but he now wished to close the painful scene. Whither are you going, said the Lady Editha?—To restore your Sigefert, answered he, springing out of the apartment.

Leofrida followed him, and conjured him to reveal where, and in what situation he had left her brother. You shall soon see him, returned the distressed Osberne; secretly determined, as he spoke this, to rescue his friend or partake his fate.

Elated with this assurance, and observing how much her enquiries pained him, Leofrida, though perplexed, asked no more questions, resting on his words, “you shall soon see him.”

Osberne

Osberne now in haste prepared to depart, and entered the saloon to bid adieu to the Count and his son. The animated, though respectful regard of Clovis towards Leofrida, could not escape the keenness of a lover's eye. Osberne, though he deemed it almost treachery to cherish expectation of happiness, found another pang added to his sorrows. To deliver Sigefert; to signalize himself in the field of glory, and acquire the highest honours of knighthood, were now the sole objects that filled his mind. Clovis, in his turn, observed with disdain the frank courtesy with which Leofrida treated her brother's companion in arms. He darted looks of indignant scorn on the brave youth, which were returned with silent yet expressive reproof.

Osberne, as he mounted his steed, bade a short farewell to Leofrida, pronouncing the name of Sigefert as he bowed his head; then stretching out his hand to his old and faithful friend, the good Mortimer,

are

THE KNIGHTS

mer, he hastily rode from the chateau, followed by Constantine.

Revolving on the most efficacious and prudent means to perform the design nearest to his heart, he determined to consult with the Marechal, whose affection for Sigefert, as well as his interest, would instigate him to recover a warrior already so distinguished in his army. Accordingly he bent his way towards the spot where he knew the British camp would by this time be pitched.

Leofrida, in some measure consoled by this short visit of Osberne, though still uncertain of the real situation of her brother, now devoted her whole care to the Lady Editha, who every day sickened more and more. The gentle Sybilla, in whose pleasing society the unfortunate exiles found a valuable consolation, assisted in the kind offices.

offices due to the sick. But the source of life was near its last ebb, and in a few days the fond affection of Leofrida was constrained to resign the faint hope that had hitherto supported her. That woe, the most serene of all the assemblage of human sorrows, now threatened to embitter her other griefs. The sanguine, the ardent Leofrida drooped beneath the suspended blow. Steady and resigned in the last scene of a tumultuous life, the Lady Editha serenely awaited the period of it, and calling Leofrida to her side, thus bestowed her final advice:—

Weep not, my beloved child, that those woes which I have so feebly supported, are near their close. Had I, through the whole series of my severe misfortunes, sustained an equal fortitude, I should have felt exultation where I now only feel resignation. Take my last, my fondest blessing,

ing, thou most destitute and most deserving,—and take at the same time a lesson dictated by fatal experience. Thy sufferings have hitherto been great; great indeed for a young and tender mind. She sighed—Leofrida kneeled by her side, and clasped her hand, in speechless attention. She proceeded.

When the light spirits exhilarate the soul and brace its sensations; its natural energy spurns the burden of affliction;—but when repeated sorrows unstring that healthy frame of mind, then is the exertion of the understanding to be called in. Shun, my dear child, as your deadliest enemy, dejection of mind! When the languid heart is weary of sorrow, and almost sickens even at joy,—to sustain, to invigorate it by sedate meditation, and keep it equally disposed to perform its allotted task in all the changeful moods of the human

man.

man faculties, is real, is heroic merit.—

Adieu, my Leofrida ! continued she—I now go to that state of existence where the frail will shall not war with its own perverseness, but shall find itself endowed with unlimited self-authority; and *to be good*, will no longer be a task, but the natural consequence of its purified nature.

Adieu! once more.—Maintain an equal, a serene dominion over all the adverse inclinations that perplex good intention—on this, on this alone—not on the fortitude of a few instances—not when you are in the humour to be heroic, but when the exertion is painful, and made from a deep sense of duty—on this depends the first felicity of mortals, a tranquil—nay a blissful death.

Wearied

Wearied nature was now overpowered by the stealing advances of dissolution—the last words faltered on her lips—she grasped the hand of Leofsida, and expired.

END OF VOL. I.



